

# STANLEY & LIVINGSTONE

NAKAVANGO CONSERVATION  
PROGRAMME



## INFORMATION BOOKLET

This information booklet covers everything from a background in Zimbabwean culture and its visa requirements to your typical day at Nakavango. Find out all you need to know about life as a volunteer in Victoria Falls!

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## SAKUBONA!



This booklet has been compiled to help you prepare for your imminent volunteer programme with Nakavango Conservation Programme.

It is difficult to describe what it is like to experience volunteer travel in Victoria Falls, perhaps it can be summed up as volunteering with like minded individuals from around the world in the midst of fascinating landscapes, warm-hearted locals and customs and traditions dating back centuries.

This booklet provides you with general information about what to expect in Victoria Falls, local customs, safety tips, your volunteer programme, your arrival, what to bring and other essential information.

Just remember, if there is anything you want to know that is not answered in this booklet, or on our website, feel free to contact us at any time.

**Get ready for one of the most amazing experiences of your life!**

Siyabonga kakulu  
(We thank you)

## THE VICTORIA FALLS TEAM



### Contacts

Nakavango Conservation Programme is a local organization based in Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe. The Nakavango Operations Manager in Victoria Falls is **Justine McGregor**, the Wild Life Manager **Ian DuPreez** and your Zimbabwean Wildlife guides **Dean McGregor (Pro) & Griffiths Mpuche**.

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### Contact Information for Family & Friends

Before you arrive in t h e country, your family may be worried and want contact information for their peace of mind. For this, we advise you to use the details of the Nakavango Conservation Programme above. Remember to email or call home as soon as you arrive in Victoria Falls, so everyone knows that you have arrived safely.

## VOLUNTEER CHECKLIST

- ✓ **Read this booklet:** This booklet has been developed by the team to answer our most frequently asked questions and share everything you need to know for your upcoming trip.
- ✓ **Send us your information:** We have emailed you an application form as well as a travel plan and profile. Please ensure that they are emailed to Justine as soon as you have confirmed your bookings.
- ✓ **Book your flights:** Book your flights as soon as possible, as this will mean you can often secure a cheaper fare.
- ✓ **Apply for a visa:** All Volunteers will be required to obtain a **BUSINESS VISA** Zimbabwe has 3 Categories All Volunteers are considered to be working so you are not legal if you get a KAZA visa or a holiday Visa.  
Visa Categories by nationality can be found at [www.evisa.gov.zw/](http://www.evisa.gov.zw/) - **/VisaRegime**
  - No Visa Required (this really means that you get a 30 day visa and it is Free.)
  - You will receive your visa at immigration on the day you arrive. You will pay for it on arrival. Canada \$75 (Single entry only) All others in Category B will cost between \$35 and \$50 for a double entry visa
  - **You must get your visa online before you depart your home country -**  
[www.evisa.gov.zw/](http://www.evisa.gov.zw/) - **/VisaRegime**. More details about Visa's can be found on page 11.
- ✓ **Obtain a criminal background check:** To participate on the programme, all volunteers are required to present a criminal background check to our Facility Manager at orientation.
- ✓ **Consult a travel doctor:** Please discuss all vaccinations with your doctor. This booklet provides you with a list of vaccinations recommended for discussion with a travel doctor at least 8 weeks before you depart.
- ✓ **Purchase travel insurance:** It is mandatory for all volunteers to purchase travel insurance when volunteering abroad.
- ✓ **Pay your programme fees:** Once we receive your initial inquiry we will send you an application form. Once we receive your completed application form we will send you an invoice for the programme. The sooner that you pay a deposit of 50% we will confirm your placement and we will require the balance to be paid 30 days before the start date.
- ✓ **Get prepared:** The better prepared you are for this experience, the more you can relax and enjoy your time in country. Do some research on Zimbabwe and Victoria Falls and learn a few phrases in Shona or Sindebele, so you can impress the locals.
- ✓ **Pack appropriately:** Try not to take too much and use the packing list in this booklet to guide you. Often volunteers like to pack donations for the people they are volunteering with and while we encourage this, we recommend volunteers purchase these donations in-country. This means you are not only investing in the economy of your host country, but also freeing up your baggage space.

## PROGRAMME OVERVIEW



Each and every volunteer brings a different set of skills, knowledge and values to the Programme, therefore the role you play in your volunteering placement will largely be decided when you reach the project after collaboration with Nakavango. We appreciate the time and money you have chosen to invest in this programme and we hope it is as rewarding and satisfying for you, as it will be for the people you will be helping. The placement will not always be easy. It will challenge and test you, but this is all part of the experience volunteering in a developing country.

While you are volunteering in Victoria Falls, remember that you are a representative for your family, your friends, your country, Nakavango, but most importantly, yourself. You are a guest in Victoria Falls and it is important to keep in mind that the people, traditions, culture and general way of life may be different from your home country. Do not try to force your way of life upon the people you will be working and living with, but instead be open minded and embrace the new cultures and ways of living that you will be exposed to (both the Zimbabwean culture and the cultures of your fellow international volunteers). This will allow you to gain a rich and authentic experience as a volunteer traveller in Zimbabwe.

### Volunteer Requirements

- ✔ Volunteers must be over 18 years of age at the beginning of the programme.
- ✔ Volunteers must present a recent criminal background check to the Operations Manager at the Orientation.
- ✔ Fluency in English is required to participate on the Nakavango, Victoria Falls programme. The staff members at the conservation centre speak English; however the mother tongue of the local people is Ndebele. Volunteers will be able to easily communicate with staff; however they should be prepared to have some difficulty communicating in with locals who only speak Ndebele.

### Criminal Background Check

To participate on the volunteer programme, all volunteers are required to provide a criminal background check at their programme orientation. A basic disclosure check from your local police is sufficient and can be obtained by visiting or contacting your local police department. Please ensure you allow sufficient time to acquire this document before you depart, as processing times vary. A background check is important to determine whether any serious criminal offence has been recorded against your name. The check must be issued within 12 months of your programme start date and is required to be presented in English. If your background check cannot be issued in English, a translated and verified copy will be accepted if presented along with the original. Anyone with a criminal record or caution for other offenses should also contact us before proceeding further.

## Location of Programme & Placements

The programme is based in Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe. Volunteers arrive at Victoria Falls International Airport (VFA) and are transported to the volunteer base on the Stanley & Livingstone Private Game Reserve. Projects are located on the reserve and in rural areas surrounding the town of Victoria Falls.

## Start & Duration of Programs

- ✓ The Victoria Falls programme begins on the **first and third Monday** of every month.
- ✓ Please make sure that you arrive on **the Sunday before** your programme starts.
- ✓ Volunteers can choose to volunteer for periods ranging from 2 weeks to 12 weeks.

## Accommodation

Volunteers are accommodated in single rooms on site at the conservation centre. The conservation centre is situated on a private game reserve and it is not uncommon to see African wildlife feeding throughout the day!

The rooms are comfortable and each room is equipped with a single bed, a ceiling fan, desk, a chair and storage shelving. Bathrooms are shared among up to four volunteers of the same gender, and offer western toilets and hot showers. In addition to the sleeping quarters, the accommodation also offers an open-air communal area with a swimming pool, braai (barbecue) and picnic tables where volunteers can socialize and enjoy meals.

Bed linens are provided and during the hot months, a sheet should be adequate cover in the evenings, as there is no air conditioning in the volunteer accommodation. During the cooler months, a duvet and a warm blanket are provided. Volunteers are asked to bring their own swimming towels. The conservation centre has a 24 hour security guard and a safe is available in the office for volunteers to store small valuables. As the reserve is a "Big 5" area (home to lion, leopard, elephant, rhino and Cape buffalo), the property is protected by an electric fence and volunteers are required to ask permission before leaving the facility.

On-site staff cleans the accommodation throughout the week. However volunteers are also required to keep these areas tidy. Laundry services are provided on a weekly basis.

## Meals

Volunteers are served three meals a day except for weekends when Brunch and Dinner are served. Fruit, bread & cereal are available all day, and snacks on weekends, prepared by an on-site cook. All meals are a mix of western and traditional Zimbabwean food. Breakfast includes cereal, porridge, fruit and toast, accompanied by coffee & tea. Lunches will be a mix of sandwiches, quiches, burgers, salads and other similar foods. Dinners will commonly comprise of pastas, fish, meat, starches and/or vegetables. Snacks are typically muffins, pastries or biscuits. The local chef is happy to accommodate special dietary requests (vegetarian, vegan, dairy or gluten free, etc.). Please let the Operations Manager know of any special dietary needs in advance.

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION



### Conservation

Volunteers on the Conservation project have the unique opportunity to gain hands-on experience in conservation management activities and assist with on-going research in a private game reserve and surrounding areas within Victoria Falls. The reserve is home to a wealth of native wildlife, including 'Big 5' animals – lion, leopard, elephant, rhino and buffalo; and serves as an intensive protection zone for the critically endangered black rhino. Volunteers on the Conservation project have the opportunity to get involved in conservation management practices, all of which are vital for the successful operation of the game reserve, its surrounding areas and their ecosystems.

### Conservation management and research activities may include:

- ✓ Alien vegetation removal
- ✓ Soil erosion control methods
- ✓ Fence patrols
- ✓ Bush walks
- ✓ Waterhole creation, maintenance and monitoring
- ✓ Game, predator and bird monitoring, tracking and counting
- ✓ Road maintenance
- ✓ Upkeep of river crossings
- ✓ Reserve clean-up operations
- ✓ Game census counting
- ✓ General clean-up of reserve and surrounding areas
- ✓ Camping out on the reserve
- ✓ Animal tracking
- ✓ Observe supplement feeding

Volunteers on the Nakavango Wildlife Conservation Programme work in tandem with members of the game reserve team and anti-poaching unit, with their work also benefitting partner organizations, including Birdlife Zimbabwe, Endangered Wildlife Trust and Zimbabwe National Parks Authority.

Our Wildlife Manager is available throughout the programme to hold discussions and debates on all aspects of conservation during your stay. This enhances volunteers' knowledge and understanding of nature conservation issues in Africa and facilitates volunteers in making a real contribution to nature conservation and local communities in Victoria Falls.

## PROGRAMME SCHEDULE



### Arrival & Departure

The Victoria Falls programme begins on the first and third Monday of every month and we ask volunteers to arrive in Victoria Falls for pick-up on the Sunday before your chosen start date. Orientation is held at the volunteer base on the first day of your volunteer program.

Accommodation is provided from the Sunday before your start date through to (and including) the Friday night of your final week. You can then depart at any time on the Saturday. We collect from Victoria Falls airport on the Sunday between 2 & 3pm from the downstairs coffee shop or from Wild Horizons office 310 Park way Victoria Falls town at 11am. Departures are at your own expense by Taxi and you should budget \$30 from the programme to the airport.

### Arriving by Flight

As soon as your flights are booked please email us to let us know. Please note, it is important to specify your airline and flight number so that if your flight is delayed our staff will be aware of changes to your arrival time.

***Should you miss any flights please advise as soon as possible so we know and can adjust accordingly.***

### Arriving Overland

If you are traveling prior to your programme beginning and plan to arrive in Victoria Falls by road, please be sure to arrive in Victoria Falls the day before your programme start date. We collect from Wild Horizons office, 310 parkway at 11am

### Post Pickup

Once you have been picked up, you will be transported to the volunteer accommodation on the game reserve. (15 minute drive from the airport) Your programme for the next few days will be explained to you with regards to meeting the other staff, volunteers and your orientation.

### Orientation

Orientation is hosted by our Victoria Falls team at the volunteer accommodation. Orientation begins on the morning of your chosen start date and covers everything you need to know for your volunteer programme in Victoria Falls – Introduction to Victoria Falls and Zimbabwe, Culture and Customs, Rules and Expectations, Safety, Travel Opportunities, Introduction to Project and Placement. The orientation will also give you a chance to meet other volunteers and swap contact details for weekend travel and socializing.



## Volunteer Week

Orientation is on the first Monday after your arrival. Monday morning starts with an Orientation game drive that will depart at 6:30am till 11am, then we will do the orientation debrief in the lounge for about 2 hours. Lunch is taken during the heat of the day and after a short rest you will be taken on another game drive to showcase the balance of the reserve. Monday to Friday we start at 6:30am and again at 4pm, except Fridays when we go out at 3:30pm for Lantana. (Note that during the rainy season we may delay starts if it is raining hard.)

Volunteers generally go out between 7am – 11am or 8am – 12pm. After lunch and a rest during the heat of the day work begins again from approximately 3pm to 7pm. There is no typical daily schedule so a general guide line is 6:30 am start in Winter back for lunch and then again we would go out at 4pm and in winter start at 8am back for lunch and out again at about 3pm.

## Volunteer Weekends

There is no shortage of things to do in Victoria Falls, with activities ranging from white-water rafting to sunset cruises. Victoria Falls is one of the largest and most spectacular waterfalls in the world and a UNESCO World Heritage Site, situated within three separate national parks - Victoria Falls National Park (Zimbabwe), Zambezi National Park (Zimbabwe) and Mosi-oa-Tunya National Park (Zambia).

Nature enthusiasts and animal lovers will have the unique opportunity to explore these areas via safari and guided tour, exploring rainforests and swirling clouds of mist, which house many endangered species. The town of Victoria Falls offers many popular tourist spots for sampling Zimbabwean cuisine and buying handicrafts from local artisans. Extreme sports are also plentiful in Victoria Falls, with white-water rafting, bungee jumping, abseiling, zip lining and gorge swinging on offer. Outdoor enthusiasts can take part in fishing, horseback riding, canoeing and cycling, leaving no shortage of options for adventure. Victoria Falls' advantageous location also allows volunteers to easily visit the bordering countries of Zambia and Botswana during the weekends. Volunteers staying in Zimbabwe after volunteering, who wish to travel further afield, can explore the ruins of the Great Zimbabwe, check out the unusual rock formations in Matobo Hills National Park, or go diving in the cobalt blue water of the Chinhoyi Caves. There is a wealth of national parks in Zimbabwe.

## ZIMBABWE COUNTRY INFORMATION



### Climate

The climate is tropical, although markedly moderated by altitude. There is a dry season, including a short cool season during the period May to September when the whole country has very little or no rain. The rainy season is typically a time of heavy rainfall from November to March.

### General

Located on the border between Zimbabwe and Zambia, Victoria Falls is a town in the province of Matabeleland North, Zimbabwe. It lies on the southern bank of the Zambezi River at the western end of the Victoria Falls, a UNESCO World Heritage site. While it is neither the highest nor the widest waterfall in the world, Victoria Falls is claimed to be the largest. This claim is based on a width of 1,708 meters (5,604 ft.) and height of 108 meters (354 ft.), forming the largest sheet of falling water in the world. Zimbabwe is the 61st largest country in the world, just larger than Japan or Montana but smaller than Paraguay, with a total area of 390,580 square kilometres.

### Topography

Most of Zimbabwe is rolling plateau, with over 75% of the country lying between 600 and 1,500 meters above sea level, and almost all of it over 300 meters. The area of high plateau, known as the Highveld, is around 650 kilometers long by 80 kilometers wide, and stretches northeast to southwest at 1,200 to 1,675 meters. This culminates in the northeast in the Inyanga mountains, reaching the country's highest point at Mount Inyangani, 2,592 meters. On either side of the Highveld is the middleveld, a plateau ranging from about 600 to 1,200 meters in height. Below 610 meters are areas making up the lowveld, wide and grassy plains in the basins of the Zambezi and the Limpopo. The Highveld is a central ridge forming the country's watershed, with streams flowing southeast to the Limpopo and Sabi rivers and northwest into the Zambezi. Only the largest of the many rivers have an all year-round flow of water.

### Demographics

Zimbabwe has an estimated population of 13.12 million people and nearly 98% of Zimbabwe's populace is African. The Shona ethnic group comprises approximately 82% of the population and occupies the eastern two-thirds of Zimbabwe. The Ndebele make up approximately 13% of the population, and are descended from Zulu migrations in the nineteenth century. Approximately 5% of the population is made up of other ethnic groups. Zimbabwe has 16 official languages with the prominent dialects being Shona and Sindebele. English is also an official language, which is used widely in administration, law, broadcasting and schools. Only 4% of the population lives in urban areas. About 50% of the population has syncretic religious beliefs (part Christian, part indigenous beliefs), while Christians account for 25%, indigenous beliefs 24%, Muslim and other beliefs 1%. As a tourist visiting Zimbabwe, there are many cultural and logistical factors to consider as you prepare for your trip. We have developed a list of details specific to your time on the volunteer programme in Victoria Falls, which should ensure you are fully prepared.

## Visa

All volunteers must apply for a business visa in order to participate at the Nakavango Conservation Programme in Victoria Falls as volunteer work is not permitted on a tourist or visitor visa. Most nationalities can obtain a business visa upon arrival, provided they meet the documentation requirements:

- ✔ Payment (costs outlined below)
- ✔ Passport with at least six months of remaining validity and four blank pages for visa stamps, plus one copy of the passport details page
- ✔ Two recent color passport photos, plus one copy
- ✔ Invitation letter provided to you via email by Nakavango staff once you have sent your arrival details, plus one copy
- ✔ Proof of departure (two copies of flight itinerary or ticket)

For volunteers planning to visit neighbouring countries while on the programme, some nationalities can obtain double entry visas. The cost varies depending on nationality. Single entry visas can be obtained for US\$30 for citizens of the United States, Australia & most European Union nations.

Canadian citizens can obtain a single entry visa for US\$75 & citizens of the UK and Ireland can obtain one for US\$55. All volunteers should state their destination as "Stanley and Livingstone Private Game Reserve". The business visa is valid for 30 days. Volunteers who plan to stay beyond the initial 30 days are subject to paying a US\$500 fee to Zimbabwe Immigration, in order to obtain a temporary work permit for a total stay of up to 90 days. Our local staff will be happy to help with the process at the local immigration office in Victoria Falls.

## You will need to have the below documentation on arrival.

- ✔ Two copies of your CV/Resume
- ✔ A certified copy of your Birth Certificate
- ✔ Chest X-Ray Certificate (showing you are free of Tuberculosis. This can also be completed once in Victoria Falls for US\$20)
- ✔ Passport size photographs (these can also be obtained once in Victoria Falls)
- ✔ Police Clearance/Background check

## Volunteers that are coming for less than 30 days require:

- ✔ Business Letter from Nakavango (This will be sent once you have your arrival details)
- ✔ Invitation Letter from Nakavango (This will be sent once you have your arrival details)
- ✔ Passport Photo x 2 copies
- ✔ Passport must have 6 months validity and 6 blank pages in it
- ✔ Proof of residence in country of origin. Water bill / Telephone bill showing home address

## Volunteers that are coming for longer than 30 days require:

- ✔ Business Letter from Nakavango (This will be sent once you have your arrival details)
- ✔ Invitation Letter from Nakavango (This will be sent once you have your arrival details)
- ✔ Passport Photo x 2 copies
- ✔ Passport must have 6 months validity and 6 blank pages in it
- ✔ Proof of residence in country of origin. Water bill / Telephone bill showing home address
- ✔ Copy of CV / Resume
- ✔ Certified copy of Birth Certificate

- ✔ A certificate proving that you are Tuberculosis free. This you will get from your GP at home
- ✔ Police clearance in english

## Zimbabwean Embassies Abroad

To find the contact details of embassies and consulates of Zimbabwe, visit the Go Abroad website.

## Travel Documents

It is highly recommended that you make two copies of all your important travel documents (passport, flight tickets, and travel insurance) before you leave home. Leave one copy with a friend or family member and take the spare copy with you. Bring your passport as well as an identification card (such as driver's license or student card) for traveling as you may be asked to present this when making tour bookings or checking in for flight/bus trips. To enter Zimbabwe, your passport must be valid for at least six months beyond the date of departure from Zimbabwe.

## Getting There

Several airlines fly into into **VICTORIA FALLS INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT (VFA)**.

|                                   |  |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| <b>ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA</b>      | Ethiopian  |
| <b>CAPE TOWN, SOUTH AFRICA</b>    | South African Airways, Kenya Airways             |
| <b>HARARE</b>                     | Fast Jet, Air Zimbabwe, Fly Africa Zimbabwe      |
| <b>JOHANNESBURG, SOUTH AFRICA</b> | British Airways, South African Airways, Fast Jet |
| <b>NAIROBI, KENYA</b>             | Kenya Airways                                    |
| <b>WINDHOEK, NAMIBIA</b>          | Air Namibia                                      |

## Money

The currency of Zimbabwe is the US Dollar– please visit the XE website to check the current exchange rate at the time of your program. Please note that the US Dollar is the most widely accepted currency. Be wary of schemers who try to take advantage of tourists by offering “currency exchange” for Zimbabwean notes in the trillions of dollars – this is an obsolete currency. We recommend taking around US\$200 in cash to keep in case of emergencies and a MasterCard or VISA credit/debit card to withdraw cash as you need it. It is strongly advised that you notify your bank of your plans to travel in Zimbabwe, so they do not put a hold on your account due to activity, which may appear suspicious. ATMs that distribute USD are readily available in Victoria Falls. You will need cash for public transportation, as well as for weekend travel, shopping and personal expenses.

- ✔ Currently ATM's In Zimbabwe DON'T GIVE CASH!!!!!!!
- ✔ Weekend activities can be paid with Visa and Mastercard
- ✔ Taxi and curios will require CASH
- ✔ Staff tips will require CASH
- ✔ Budget on ± \$200 per week for (personal shopping and taxis)
- ✔ Budget on ± \$10 per week for tips (at your discretion)

## General Health & Vaccinations



It is expected that all volunteers have their own health insurance. Vaccinations are not typically required to enter Zimbabwe; however this can vary depending on your travel path. We therefore recommend carrying out independent research and talking to a travel doctor about the required vaccinations if you plan to travel before or after your volunteer program. You may choose to get vaccinated against some illnesses (please see our list below of recommended vaccinations).

On the off chance that you fall sick and need a doctor's attention, Nakavango has access to an emergency medical service and will take you to the hospital if necessary. There are good and reputable hospitals where you can be treated. It is important to note that in the unlikely event you require medical care, doctors and hospitals require immediate payment. Although you will be covered by your travel insurance it is recommended to take a credit card of US\$250 cash to cover any unforeseen medical care, which can be claimed from your travel insurance provider upon your return. Before you go to Victoria Falls, it is important that you discuss your trip with a travel doctor, ideally 4 to 6 weeks prior to your programme start date. You may wish to get vaccinations or prophylactics against some illnesses. Please see the list below as a guide on which to discuss with your doctor.

### Recommended Vaccinations and Prophylactics for Victoria Falls are as follows:

- ✓ Polio
- ✓ Hepatitis A
- ✓ Hepatitis B
- ✓ Diphtheria/Tetanus
- ✓ Typhoid
- ✓ Rabies
- ✓ Yellow Fever (required for entry in many African nations)
- ✓ Malaria (please consult with your doctor about how to prevent malaria while traveling)
- ✓ Medication for stomachaches and headaches

### Communication

Most parts of Zimbabwe have a reasonably good communications infrastructure. WiFi access is available at the volunteer accommodation and in many cafes and restaurants throughout the country; however periodic outages are not uncommon. If you bring an unlocked, SIM- compatible mobile phone you will be able to buy a local SIM card for approximately US\$5, with airtime credit in intervals of US\$5. Both international and local calls can be made. The country code is +263.

## Zimbabwe Wall Plugs & Adapters

The socket type found in the volunteer accommodation in Victoria Falls is the square three-prong plug (Type G), as commonly used in the UK. Please bring an adaptor for any items that are not compatible with this plug type. The voltage in Zimbabwe is 220 V and the frequency is 50Hz.



## Clothing & Culture

Casual, modern clothing is permitted as suitable attire in Victoria Falls. However, it is advisable to dress neatly and wear clean, conservative clothing that covers the shoulders and knees while volunteering on your project. Clothing should not be overly tight or show excessive skin. Volunteers love to go out socializing in Victoria Falls on the weekends, so bring something you like to wear out. Camouflage clothing is illegal in Zimbabwe.

## Laundry

A weekly laundry service is provided for volunteers by the housekeeping staff at the volunteer accommodation. Please ensure that all of your clothing and towels are labelled with your name to ensure that you receive all of your laundry back in your own laundry bag. Laundry bags are provided.

## Transport

The most common methods of transport for volunteers in Victoria Falls is taxi or the programme vehicles.

Volunteers travel to and from their work site using programme vehicles or walking, depending on the activities for the day. Volunteers will use taxi transport in their free time. To travel into the town of Victoria

Falls during the weekends will typically cost US\$30 for a round trip.

## Shopping

There are grocery stores, pharmacies, markets and shopping centres in the town of Victoria Falls, where you will be able to purchase everything that you need; from toiletries, to snacks and drinks, to sanitary and other personal items. If you want to eat out on the weekends, there are a selection of restaurants and bars in town, on which Justine will be happy to provide recommendations.

## What's happening in Victoria Falls?

After registering, volunteers often like to know what is happening in the country they will be traveling to. The following website contains up to date news and information from Victoria Falls:

Victoria Falls 24

## Culture & Customs

Zimbabweans are very warm, friendly people and will typically greet you enthusiastically. Handshake greetings are very common in Zimbabwe, which typically comprise of three stages: a normal handshake, which is followed by a connection of hooked fingers (thumbs raised and touching) and finishing in a normal handshake – ask a local to show you how! Speaking to someone with your hands in your pockets is considered very rude. When you wave hello, be sure to rotate your wrist. A simple palm-outward raised hand is a sign of opposition to the president and government. It's an easy mistake to make that could be misinterpreted as offensive! Tips of 10% are customary

## Packing List:

- ✓ Copies of important travel documents, such as passport, criminal background check, travel insurance, visas, plane tickets and passport photos
- ✓ Medical kit with aspirin (or a similar pain reliever), antihistamine for relief from allergies or insect bites, diarrhea 'stoppers' (such as Diastop) scissors and tweezers, band aids, antiseptic cream for cuts and grazes, sunscreen, lip balm, insect repellent and any personal medication
- ✓ Toiletries, including toothbrush, toothpaste, shampoo, conditioner, soap/body wash and contact lenses
- ✓ Towel(s)
- ✓ Work Gloves
- ✓ Laptop, iPad or Smartphone so you have access to WiFi
- ✓ You can buy a SIM card for around US\$5 (to make local calls, send texts and receive international calls)
- ✓ Camera
- ✓ Plug Adapters and chargers for your electronics
- ✓ A set of nice clothes – it is most likely you will want to go out for dinner or dancing
- ✓ Sun hat and sunglasses
- ✓ Swimsuit
- ✓ Swimming Towel

## Day Pack:

- ✓ A small padlock for securing bags and valuables
- ✓ Torch, binoculars and water bottle
- ✓ Sleeping bag for weekly camp out
- ✓ Books, music and other entertainment for long travel and 'down time'
- ✓ Travel guide (many volunteers find Lonely Planet to be very helpful for preparation and once they are in Victoria Falls)
- ✓ This information booklet
- ✓ Journal and pens to keep a diary

## Clothing:

- ✓ Neutral-colored clothing, khaki colors – camouflage clothing is banned in Zimbabwe
- ✓ Collared khaki shirts, both short and long-sleeved
- ✓ Khaki pants and shorts
- ✓ Comfortable walking shoes, preferably hiking boots
- ✓ Sun hat/cap and a warm hat/beanie
- ✓ Sweatshirt/fleece top and windbreaker/rain jacket
- ✓ Casual clothing for evening wear
- ✓ Underwear and socks
- ✓ T-shirts are fine, they don't have to have a collar



## Volunteer Supplies

Often it is difficult for volunteers to travel abroad with supplies due to limitations on baggage weight. However, you will have access to shopping centres in Victoria Falls where supplies can be bought once you arrive. This is our recommended and preferred way to contribute to your project, as not only does it mean you do not have to carry the supplies on the plane with you, it means any money you spend will stimulate the local economy. As community development initiatives are carried out in conjunction with conservation activities on the Nakavango Victoria Falls program, some volunteers choose to bring supplies to the local schools they will be working in. Below is a list of supplies that are useful for the community development initiatives involved in the programme. Students can choose any number of items from this list to bring with them.

- ✓ First aid materials
- ✓ Flip-flops/shoes
- ✓ Children's clothing
- ✓ Bubble solution
- ✓ Face Paint
- ✓ Music player and some children's music
- ✓ Musical instruments
- ✓ Stickers, stamps and certificates
- ✓ Group games without small pieces, such as Twister
- ✓ Colored drawing paper
- ✓ Pencils/pens/markers/crayons
- ✓ Books (any type)
- ✓ Posters
- ✓ Colored pavement chalk
- ✓ Chalk

## Safety

Traveling abroad can always bring out a mixture of excitement and nervousness. However, when you are immersing yourself in a foreign culture through volunteering and living among the local community, this apprehension can often be compounded. If you have not traveled much before, it is difficult to know what to expect and often volunteers (and their loved ones) are concerned for their safety and security. Although it would be foolish of us to try and "guarantee" anybody's safety, we do everything we can to ensure your volunteer programme is as safe and secure as possible. Every programme that we offer has been personally inspected and selected by a director from the company. We have lived in the accommodations, experienced the orientations, worked on the projects and built strong and trusting relationships with our local staff. If we did not believe the programs were safe enough to send our own children to, we would not offer them.

In the unlikely event that something was to happen, volunteers have various layers of support that they can go through (and people who will help them in the case of an accident).

- ✓ Victoria Falls Volunteer Coordinator
- ✓ Placement Staff
- ✓ Accommodation Managers
- ✓ Nakavango Programme Manager
- ✓ Programs are monitored on an ongoing basis to gauge volunteers' experiences and we are continually improving our placements and projects through this feedback. The safety and security of our programs is constantly being reviewed and if you have any concerns, we encourage you to discuss these with the local staff during your programme orientation.
- ✓ During orientation, the local staff will also provide guidance in the area of safety and security.
- ✓ Listed below are some general safety tips.
  
- ✓ Avoid wearing jewelry on the streets – especially gold neck chains or items that would be appealing to “would be thieves”.
- ✓ Handbags are always a temptation. However if you must carry one, keep it in front of you. A backpack is better.
- ✓ Be alert.
- ✓ Always tell someone where you are going before you attempt long journeys and ensure you are confident with directions. Be especially careful at night. Use taxi drivers you know (keep a telephone number) or who are connected to the place where you are traveling. Our local staff will recommend some specific drivers during orientation. If you are unsure, always ask local staff whom to use.
- ✓ Keep in groups at night and never walk down dark, empty streets. If possible use transport from door to door after dark. Keep in mind the recognized tourist areas can be considered potentially high-risk areas for pickpockets and thieves.
- ✓ Leave your valuables behind before a night in town.
- ✓ For traffic safety, keep looking to the left and right and walk slowly when crossing the road.
- ✓ Always keep an eye on your drinks when out socializing.

## Security

Victoria Falls is a relatively safe area comparative to other developing nations. Theft is a relatively low risk in Victoria Falls, but snatch-theft on the street and theft from hotel rooms are not unknown. You are cautioned to make sure that you have your valuables kept safe, somewhere you can feel them at all times, especially when you are in crowded market places or nightclubs. Our local staff will also guide you in orientation on areas to stay away from. Most tourists in Victoria Falls never experience any trouble and as long as you stay alert and use common sense you should not have any problems. Our local staff will guide you more on safety and security during orientation. If you are ever unsure of anything just ask the local staff, they are only too happy to help.

## Security Warnings

The following governments publish useful travel advisories, highlighting entry requirements, medical facilities, areas with health & safety risks, civil unrest or other dangers, and are generally very up to date:

|                |  |
|----------------|--|
| UNITED STATES  | <a href="http://www.travel.state.gov">www.travel.state.gov</a>           |
| CANADA         | <a href="http://www.voyage.gc.ca">www.voyage.gc.ca</a>                   |
| UNITED KINGDOM | <a href="http://www.fco.gov.uk/travel">www.fco.gov.uk/travel</a>         |
| AUSTRALIA      | <a href="http://www.smarttraveller.gov.au">www.smarttraveller.gov.au</a> |
| UNITED STATES  | <a href="http://www.mft.govt.nv">www.mft.govt.nv</a>                     |

## Responsible Drinking

While in country on your volunteer trip, it is natural that you and other volunteers will want to socialize and go out together as a group. This is great and while we encourage this, it is important to recognize the risks and dangers that can occur while out partying. Many of our volunteers are at an age where they enjoy socializing and going out regularly. All we ask is - please drink responsibly! It can be exciting to be in a foreign country - the nightlife is great, the people are different, you have new friends and it can be easy to get overexcited and lose control of how much you are drinking. When you are drunk, you start to lose awareness of your surroundings and your judgment starts to deteriorate, which can be incredibly dangerous. Always assign at

least one person in your group to remain sober and remember you are in a new environment and outside of the comfort zone of your home country. Enjoy your night, but drink responsibly!

## Drug Use

It goes without saying that the consumption of illegal and prescription drugs (if you do not have a prescription for the drugs), is forbidden. Our local staff will outline our rules regarding this during your orientation, however if a volunteer is caught using illegal drugs, he/she will be removed from the programme immediately with no refund. To consider buying or taking illegal drugs is extremely foolish and the consequences are extreme. We do not want our volunteers having their volunteer holiday turning into life imprisonment in a third world jail. It is important that all volunteers are aware of the consequences, should they be silly enough to buy or consume any illegal substances.

## Travel Insurance

It is mandatory to purchase travel insurance when participating on a Nakavango volunteer programme. It is inevitable that things may not always go to plan while you are traveling and although Nakavango does everything it can to ensure your trip abroad goes smoothly, it is essential to ensure you have adequate travel insurance should you fall sick, your bags go missing, or something is stolen. Nakavango has therefore partnered with travel insurance provider, World Nomads, to ensure volunteers have access to the best insurance deals designed specifically with volunteer travelers in mind. World Nomads are recommended by highly regarded travel experts, Lonely Planet, and are underwritten by insurance giants Allianz, IHI, BCS Insurance Group, BUPA, Mondial Assistance and Millstream. This insurance covers medical emergencies, emergency evacuation, trip, cancellation, personal belongings and personal liability. World Nomads quotes are extremely competitive and they are one of the only insurance companies that allow travelers to claim whilst traveling, or extend their policy if they decide to stay longer. Find our more information and obtain a free no obligation quote from our recommended travel insurance partner via our Travel Insurance page.



## Social Media

Social media provides an excellent platform for our past, present and future volunteers to network with each other. As we are unable to give out individual volunteer details, we manage a number of networks where volunteers can connect with each other before, during and after their volunteer programs.

## Newspaper Article - Get Recognized For Your Work

Many volunteers choose to share their volunteer trips with local newspapers and community magazines to help promote awareness of the work they will be doing and inspire others within their community to volunteer abroad. This means we are constantly finding stories about volunteers in newspapers from all around the world! Some volunteers also use the media coverage as a way to help fundraise for their volunteer trips and placements. If you are interested in gaining recognition for your work and promoting awareness of volunteering abroad, we encourage you to contact your local newspaper or community magazine, who in our experience, are generally very interested and willing to share our volunteers' stories.

## MORE INFORMATION



### Movies About Zimbabwe

Everyone's Child (1996) – Tsitsi Dangarembga

Spell My Name (2005) – Tsitsi Dangarembga

White Hunter Black Heart (1990) – Clint Eastwood Music by Prudence (2010) – Roger Ross William

### Websites About Victoria Falls & Zimbabwe

Victoria Falls Travel Guide: [www.victoriafalls-guide.net](http://www.victoriafalls-guide.net)

Lonely Planet: [www.lonelyplanet.com/zimbabwe](http://www.lonelyplanet.com/zimbabwe)

National Geographic: Victoria Falls Guide: <http://travel.nationalgeographic.com/travel/world-heritage/victoria-falls/>

### Books About Zimbabwe

Don't Let's Go to the Dogs Tonight: Alexandra Fuller

Rainbow's End: Lauren St John

The Last Resort: Douglas Rogers

The Elephants and I: Sharon Pincott

The Boy Next Door: Irene Sabatini

Evolution and Innovation in Wildlife Conservation: Brian Child and Helen Suich

Lonely Planet Zimbabwe: Tione Chinula and Vincent Talbot

Mukiwa: Peter Godwin

