

ZIMBABWE COUNTRY INFO AND GUIDELINES



Climate

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

General

Victoria Falls is a town is located in the province of Matabeleland North, Zimbabwe, on the border with Zambia. It lies on the southern bank of the Zambezi River at the western end of the Victoria Falls. While it is neither the highest nor the widest waterfall in the world, Victoria Falls is claimed to be the biggest. This claim is based on a width of 1 708m (5,6ft) and height of 108m (354ft), forming the largest sheet of falling water in the world. Zimbabwe is the 61st largest country in the world – just larger than Japan but smaller than Paraguay, with a total area of 390 580km².

Topography

Most of Zimbabwe is rolling plateau, with over 75% of the country lying between 600 and 1 500m above sea level. The area of high plateau, known as the highveld, is around 650m long and 80km wide, and stretches northeast to southwest at 1 200 to 1 675m. This culminates in the northeast in the Inyanga Mountains, reaching the country's highest point at Mount Inyangani (2 592m). On either side of the highveld is the middleveld – a plateau at about 600 to 1 200m. Below 610m, are areas making up the lowveld – wide and grassy plains in the Zambezi basin. The highveld is a central ridge forming the country's watershed, with streams flowing northwest into the Zambezi. Only the largest of the many rivers have an all year-round water flow.

Demographics

Zimbabwe has an estimated population of 13.12 million people, and nearly 98% of Zimbabwe's populace is of African origin. The Shona ethnic group comprises approximately 82% of the population, and occupies a large part of eastern Zimbabwe. The Ndebele make up about 13% of the population, and primarily live in the southwest of the country. 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 widely used in administration, law, media, and schooling. Only 4% of the population lives in urban areas. About 50% of the population has syncretic religious beliefs (part Christian, part indigenous beliefs), while 25% of the population follow Christianity, 24% follow Islam, and 1% follow other religions.

Visa

All volunteers must apply for a Business Visa in order to participate in the programme. Volunteer work is not permitted on a Holiday Visa. Most nationalities can obtain a Business Visa upon arrival, provided they have the following documentation:

- ✔ 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 in the programme, some nationalities can obtain a double-entry visa. The cost varies depending on nationality. Single-entry visas can be obtained for US\$30 for citizens of the United States, Australia, and most European Union nations. Canadian citizens can only obtain a single-entry visa for US\$75. Citizens of the UK and Ireland can obtain a single-entry visa for US\$55. All volunteers should state their destination as "Stanley & 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 town.

You will need to have the below documentation on arrival:

- ✔ Two copies of your CV/resume
- ✔ 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 about 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 we have your arrival details)
- ✔ Invitation letter from Nakavango (this will be sent once we have your arrival details)
- ✔ Passport photo x two copies
- ✔ Passport must have six months validity and four blank pages in it
- ✔ Proof of residence in country of origin e.g. 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 we have your arrival details)
- ✔ Invitation letter from Nakavango (this will be sent once we have your arrival details)
- ✔ Passport photo x two copies
- ✔ Passport must have six months validity and four blank pages in it
- ✔ Proof of residence in country of origin e.g. water bill/telephone bill showing home address
- ✔ Two copies of your CV/resume
- ✔ Certified copy of your birth certificate
- ✔ Medical certificate stating that you are Tuberculosis-free
- ✔ Police clearance certificate in English

Zimbabwean Embassies Abroad

To find the contact details of embassies and consulates of Zimbabwe, visit www.goabroad.com

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 set of copies with a friend or family member, and bring the spare copies with you. Bring your passport, as well as an identification card (e.g. driver's license or student card) 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 your departure from the country.

Getting There

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

ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA	Ethiopian
CAPE TOWN, SOUTH AFRICA	South African Airways; Kenya Airways
HARARE	Fast Jet; Air Zimbabwe; Fly Africa Zimbabwe
JOHANNESBURG, SOUTH AFRICA	British Airways; South African Airways; Fast Jet
NAIROBI, KENYA	Kenya Airways
WINDHOEK, NAMIBIA	Air Namibia

Money

The currency of Zimbabwe is the US Dollar – please visit www.xe.com to check the exchange rate at the time of your programme. Please note that the US Dollar is the most widely accepted currency here. 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 that may appear suspicious. ATMs that distribute US Dollars are readily available in Victoria Falls. You will need cash for public transportation, as well as for weekend travel, shopping, and personal expenses.

- ✔ Weekend activities can be paid for with VISA and Mastercard credit/debit cards
- ✔ Taxis and curio shops will require cash
- ✔ Staff gratuities are given in cash (at your discretion)
- ✔ Budget ± US\$200 per week for personal shopping and taxis
- ✔ Budget ± US\$10 per week for gratuities (at your discretion)

Communication

Most parts of Zimbabwe have a reasonably good communications infrastructure. Wi-Fi access is available at the conservation centre, as well as at many cafes and restaurants throughout the country – however periodic outages are common. If you bring a SIM lock-free mobile phone, you will be able to buy a local SIM card for about US\$5 and airtime credit in US\$5 increments. Both international and local calls can be made. The country code is +263.

Zimbabwe Wall Plugs and Adapters

The socket type at the conservation centre is the square three-prong plug (Type G), as is 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 220V and the frequency is 50Hz.



Clothing and 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 in the programme. Clothing should not be overly tight or show excessive skin. Volunteers love to go out socialising in Victoria Falls on the weekends, so bring something you like to wear out. Please note: camouflage clothing is illegal in Zimbabwe.

Transport

The most common methods of transport for volunteers in Victoria Falls are taxi or Nakavango's vehicles. Volunteers travel to and from the work sites by the programme's vehicles or walking – depending on the activities for the day. Volunteers will use taxi transport in their free time. A return Victoria Falls town taxi transfer will typically cost US\$30.

Shopping

There are grocery stores, pharmacies, markets, and shopping centres in Victoria Falls town, where you will be able to purchase everything that you need – from toiletries, to snacks and drinks, and other personal items. If you want to eat out on the weekends, there are a selection of restaurants and bars in town – Justine is 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 – victoriafalls24.com contains up to date news and information from Victoria Falls.

Culture and Customs

Zimbabweans are warm, friendly people and will typically greet you enthusiastically. A handshake greeting is common in Zimbabwe, which typically comprise of three stages: a normal handshake, followed by a connection of hooked fingers (thumbs raised and touching), and ending 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 – please note: a simple palm-outward raised hand is a sign of opposition to the president and government. Gratuities of 10% are customary.