

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.

Zimbabwean Visa Requirements

Upon arrival at the immigration desk in Victoria Falls, please list your destination as:

Nakavango Conservation Programme
The Victoria Falls Private Game Reserve,
Old Ursula Road,
Nakavango Estate,
Victoria Falls,
Zimbabwe

Please indicate that the purpose of your visit is 'Business'. If an explanation is required, state that you will be visiting Victoria Falls in the capacity of an ecotourist and staying on the Victoria Falls Private Game Reserve, where you'll be participating in the Nakavango Conservation Programme.

You must get a Business Visa, which you will have to pay for in cash US\$ – approximately US\$55 – card payments are not accepted. Please note that Business Visas are valid only for 30 days. This will cover the duration of your placement with us.

If you would like to leave Zimbabwe at any time during your stay to go into Botswana or Zambia – many volunteers wish to see the falls from both the Zimbabwe and Zambia sides – we recommend you rather get a Double Entry Business Visa. This visa costs approximately US\$80, and you will need to pay in cash US\$.

Unfortunately, Canadian passport holders can only be issued with a Single Entry Business Visa. They can still go across to Botswana or Zambia, but upon their return, will have to obtain another Business Visa.

To confirm, regardless of the duration of your stay in Zimbabwe (e.g. 2 weeks, 4 weeks) all volunteers are to apply for a Business Visa/Double Entry Business Visa. Volunteers who wish to stay longer than 4 weeks will be required to obtain a Temporary Work Permit (approximately US\$500) before their initial 30-day Business Visa expires.

Required documentation for visa applications:

- ✔ Payment, as detailed above
- ✔ Passport, valid for at least 6 months after your return home, and with 4 blank pages
- ✔ One copy of your passport details page
- ✔ Two recent colour passport photographs of yourself, plus one copy
- ✔ Invitation letter from Nakavango (sent to you once we have your arrival details) addressing the
- ✔ Department of Immigration Zimbabwe to request a Double Entry Business Visa (Single Entry
- ✔ Business Visa for Canadians) – this letter should be used when applying online or upon arrival in
- ✔ Zimbabwe, depending on the requirements for your nationality
- ✔ If you are required to apply online, please print out your visa confirmation letter to bring with you
- ✔ to Zimbabwe – please do not rely on the Internet to be working on the day of your arrival
- ✔ Business letter from International Volunteer HQ
- ✔ Proof of your scheduled departure from Zimbabwe – 2 copies of your flight itinerary or ticket

Required documentation for work permit application

In addition to the above-listed requirements, you will also need:

- ✔ A certified copy of your birth certificate
- ✔ A chest x-ray certificate confirming that you are free from tuberculosis

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.