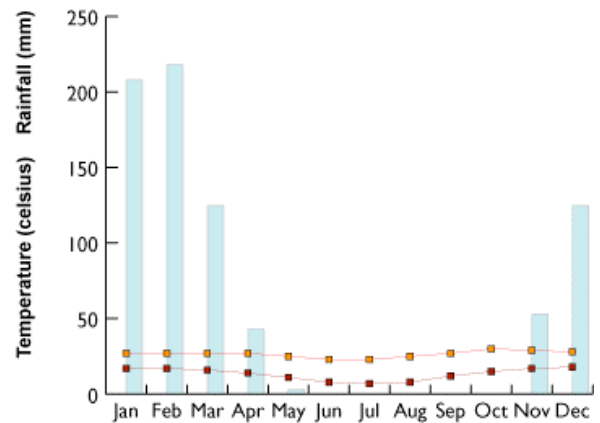




General Travel Information

MALAWI



rainfall
 average daily temperature (max)
 average daily temperature (min)

Airports, Airlines & Airport taxes

Malawi has 2 international airports – Kamuzu International in Lilongwe, and Chileka Airport in Blantyre. Air Malawi is the national carrier operating both domestic and regional routes with South African, Kenya Airways, Ethiopian and Air Zimbabwe being the only other carriers currently operating scheduled services to the country. Good connections exist between Malawi and regional hubs in Nairobi, Johannesburg, Harare, Lusaka and Dar es Salaam.

Airport taxes are payable for both domestic and international departures. Commercial Airline tickets issued after **July 2008** have airport taxes of US\$30 included in the ticket however guests travelling on private charter flights or holding tickets issued before this date will be required to pay in cash on departure –MK200 (approx USD1.50) for domestic departures.

Cities

Capital: LILONGWE 500,800 (2004 estimate)
 Largest City: BLANTYRE 627,000

Climate

In general the seasons may be divided into the cool and dry (May to Mid-August); the hot and dry (Mid-August to November); the rainy (November to April). However, the variety of altitudes in Malawi means that the temperatures and amount of rainfall varying considerable throughout the country. The ultra violet rays are very strong and high factor sun cream should be worn. Sun cream is not readily available in stores in the country.

Communications, Telephones & Internet

There is an extensive telephone network with one fixed-line operator and two cellular networks (Telkom and Zain). Malawi has a GSM cellular network and most general dealers sell phone cards. Roaming services are available but will vary depending on agreements between international and local service providers. International dialling code +265.

Internet cafes are available in the main cities with wireless broadband connections available in major hotels, airports and select restaurants using scratch cards or through hotel rooms and business centres. www.skyband.mw for more details.

The postal system tends to be slow and unreliable while DHL is the major international courier operating in Malawi.

Credit Cards

Malawi is relatively unsophisticated with regards international credit cards being accepted. Several restaurants and smaller lodges do not have facilities to accept credit card payments while major hotels, airlines and travel agents charge a service fee of between 5% and 12% for payment by Visa or Mastercard.

National Bank in Malawi are the agents for VISA in Malawi, therefore VISA card holders can draw Malawi Kwacha from ATM's at airports and all major commercial centres.

Crime & Safety

As with travel to any country using common sense and being alert and aware will help you enjoy a trouble free holiday. Malawi has not history of violent crime but economic hardships, especially in the

Crime & Safety (...cont)

larger cities, inevitably lead to a degree of theft. Be careful, not paranoid

Currency & Banking

Malawi's official currency is the *Kwacha* (MWK).

Visitors are only permitted to export K2,000 on departure from Malawi so we recommend keeping your kwacha to a minimum as it is very difficult to buy hard currency on departure.

While being a relatively stable regional currency devaluation in excess of 30% are not uncommon. At time of print the rate of exchange in for Malawi kwacha vs US Dollars was 140:1 while Pound Sterling vs Kwacha rate was 296:1. For current foreign exchange rates please visit the link <http://www.natbank.co.mw/>

Customs & Excise

Visitors are not allowed to take more than MWK2000 in local currency when you leave Malawi - they actually physically check this on departure. The following goods may be imported into Malawi by passengers without incurring customs duty: 200 cigarettes or 225g of tobacco in any form; for those over 16 years of age, also 1l of spirits and 1l of beer and 1l of wine. The import of firearms is prohibited unless a permit has been bought in advance.

Electricity Supply

Malawian electricity is 220/230 volts AC running at 50Hz. The plug type used is the square bayonet 3 pin style (like UK). Please remember that most of the more remote camps and lodges will not run off mains electricity but will use generators. This means that recharging batteries etc may not always be possible. Please travel with spare batteries.

Gay Travel in Malawi

Homosexuality in Malawi is still considered illegal with no age of consent set. The country is conservative and holds strong traditional social values. It is however not uncommon for gay and lesbian travellers to visit Malawi without encountering any problem by simply exercising a degree of discretion. Common sense and courtesy prevails – The bulk of properties we use in our itineraries are professional establishments and have trained staff to cater for all guests. Ulendo Safaris will be able to provide more information.

Historical Overview

The first inhabitants of present-day Malawi were probably related to the San (Bushman) while a new wave of Bantu-speaking peoples arrived around the 14th cent., and they soon coalesced into the Maravi kingdom (late 15th–late 18th cent.), centred in the Shire River valley. The kingdom declined as a result of internal rivalries and incursions by the Yao, who sold their Malawi captives as slaves to Arab and Swahili merchants living on the Indian Ocean coast. In the 1840s the region was thrown into further turmoil by the arrival from S Africa of the warlike Ngoni.

In 1859, David Livingstone, visited Lake Nyasa and drew European attention to the effects of the slave trade there which in turn led to the establishment of Presbyterian missionary societies in the region. Great Britain sent a consul to the area in 1883 and to proclaim the Shire Highlands Protectorate in 1889. In 1891 the British Central African Protectorate (known from 1907 until 1964 as Nyasaland), which included most of present-day Malawi, was established. During the 1890s, British forces ended the slave trade in the protectorate. At the same time, Europeans established coffee-growing estates in the Shire region, worked by Africans.

In 1953 the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland (Modern day Zambia, Zimbabwe and Malawi) was formed, over the strong opposition of Nyasaland's African population, who feared that the more aggressively white-oriented policies of Southern Rhodesia would eventually be applied to them. In 1958, Dr. Hastings Kamuzu Banda became the leader of the local political movement, named the Malawi Congress Party (MCP). Banda organized protests against British rule that led to the dissolution of The Federation in 1963, and on July 6, 1964, Nyasaland became independent as Malawi.

Banda led the country in the era of independence, first as prime minister and, he was made president for life in 1971. He quickly alienated other leaders by governing autocratically, by allowing Europeans to retain considerable influence within the country, and by refusing to oppose white-minority rule in South Africa. Despite Malawi's continued economic and political relations with the South African apartheid government, Malawi enjoyed considerable economic prosperity in the 1970s, attributable in large part to foreign investment.

In a 1993 referendum Malawians voted for an end to one-party rule, and parliament passed legislation establishing a multiparty democracy and abolishing the life presidency. In a free election in 1994, Banda was defeated by Bakili Muluzi, his former political protégé, who called for a policy of national reconciliation. Muluzi formed a coalition government and went on to serve 2 terms as president with his campaign for changing the constitution to allow him to stand for a third term failing and Bingu wa Mutharika winning the 2004 presidential election. Mutharika faces elections for his second term in

2009. Malawi prides itself on a non-violent history and, while Malawian's enthusiastically debate political issues, the country enjoys a democratic government with a healthy respect for the legal structure and democratic principles of the country which ensures a stable political climate.

Insurance

All clients should have full medical insurance, and we strongly advise that luggage be insured too. Full trip cancellation insurance is recommended as we do need to adhere to our cancellation policy.

Land Area

Total Area: 118,500 sq km (45,750 sq miles) 1/5th of the area of Malawi is made up by Lake Malawi at 24,500 sq km.

Language, Religion & Ethnic Groups

Chichewa is the national language, but English, the official language, is widely spoken and understood in most of the country.

Local languages can be summarized as follows: Chichewa 57.2% (official), Chinyanja 12.8%, Chiyao 10.1%, Chitumbuka 9.5%, Chiwenya 2.7%, Chitanga 1.7%, Others 3.6% (1998)

Religion is predominantly Protestant, followed by Roman Catholic and Muslim. Indigenous and other beliefs are in the minority. Christian 80%, Islam 13%, none 4% (1998) – Islam is however growing rapidly in Malawi. Malawi allows religious freedom and shows great tolerance of all religious groups.

There are several ethnic groups in Malawi including Chewa, Nyanja, Tambuka, Yao, Sena, Lomwe, Tonga, Ngoni, Ngande, Asian and Europeans.

Local Time

Malawi is 2 hours ahead of GMT

Medical Issues

The following immunizations are advisable when travelling to Malawi – Polio, Hepatitis A, Tetanus, Rabies, Typhoid and Meningitis.

It is compulsory that you be vaccinated against Yellow Fever if you come from an endemic area.

Malaria is endemic to Malawi so it is strongly advised that suitable prophylactics are taken – please contact your local travel clinic or doctor for recommendations.

There is a small risk of contracting bilharzia if bathing in Lake Malawi but this is negligible near the main beach hotels and islands. The infection is relatively easily treated once diagnosed and should not keep visitors out of the water!

While Malawi suffers from a high HIV infection in its local population, risk of contracting HIV is low for the majority of visitors to the country provided they exercise common sense and take precautions. It goes without saying that Ulendo strongly advise guests to avoid casual sexual interaction while on holiday. Prostitution is illegal in the country.

While Ulendo Safaris hold emergency evacuation cover for all our clients, we strongly recommend that all guests visiting the country ensure their medical and travel insurance is current and valid for the region before travelling.

It is recommended that you know your blood group in case of emergency and communicate details of any allergies to our offices at time of booking. Emergency evacuation by air is possible from Malawi.

Population (2006 estimates)

13,013,926 (growth rate: 2.4%); birth rate: 43.1/1000; infant mortality rate: 94.4/1000; life expectancy 41.7; density per sq mile: 358.

Public Holidays 2008

01 January	New Year's Day
15 January	John Chilembwe Day
03 March	Martyr's Day
21 March	Good Friday
24 March	Easter Monday
01 May	Labour Day
14 June	Freedom Day - tbc
06 July	Republic Day
13 October	Mothers' Day
25 December	Christmas Day
26 December	Boxing Day (CANCELLED)

* Eid is also celebrated in Malawi but dates are only confirmed a few weeks before this Islamic religious holiday. When a public holiday falls on a Saturday or Sunday, the following Monday becomes a holiday

Social Conventions & Culture

Under the rule of Dr Banda there were numerous restrictions in place, however these days these have been relaxed. Ladies may wear trousers and men may have long hair! At the lakeshore resorts beach wear is allowed, however when visiting rural areas it is advisable to cover up so as not to cause offence. The country is fairly conservative.

Please be sensitive when photographing local people and their villages – requests will generally be met with laughing children exercising their limited

knowledge of English by shouting out “Give me money!” – all very good natured. Ask the guide or the villagers first. Be careful when photographing public buildings and persons in uniform - again, ask first, as there are still bans on photographing anything with security overtones.

Tipping / Gratuities

Most restaurants and hotels include a 10% service levy in their prices. Tipping is voluntary, but since wages are very low, it is always appreciated. 10% is usually the standard tip for most situations. The tendency for most visitors is to over tip staff. Please bear in mind that the average daily wage for a hotel employee is around USD3 per day.

Transportation & Roads

Malawi has approximately 5500km of paved roads and a further 23,00km unpaved. As a rule roads are in a reasonable state of repair following initiatives by government to use fuel levies for road maintenance along with recent donor support for rehabilitation and paving of key routes in the country. While some roads are still in a poor state of repair, most areas of the country are easily accessible throughout the year.

Malawi Lake services operate various scheduled cargo and passenger services with the *MV Ilala* offering basic accommodation suitable for adventurous tourists. Rail transportation in the country is poor with the few locomotives operating focused primarily on cargo transport. Malawi officially has 43 airstrips registered with the Department of Civil Aviation. The majority of these are not open for commercial use or are for military operations only. Refer to information in this manual on airfields in Malawi.

Travellers Cheques

Travellers cheques are widely accepted and exchanged at hotels, banks or bureau de change in the major cities or airports. It is best to carry hard currency in small denominations, in Euro, Sterling, US Dollars or South African Rand which are all easily exchanged.

Visas and Immigration

A valid passport, with at least six months to expiry date from intended exit date, is required to enter Malawi. If your passport is likely to expire you should get a new one before arriving. Nationals requiring visas must obtain these prior to arrival in Malawi as they can no longer be issued at port of entry. Citizens of the EU, USA and the Commonwealth (except India, Pakistan and Nigeria) do not require a visa. Other nationalities may require a visa to enter Malawi – please ask our sales staff for information. We would

encourage agents to check with our offices prior to travel to ensure your clients are given up to date information on this important issue.

What to Bring on Safari

You should always travel with soft bags not hard suitcases (not only for the smaller aircraft but also to fit into vehicles). If you are using a small plane at ANY point of the safari then **DO NOT exceed 12kg.**

- A hat, sunglasses, high strength sun screen, moisturiser, lip salve, strong insect repellent, anti-histamine cream and tablets should always be carried.
- Clothes: all camps, lodges and hotels have a daily laundry service, so do not bring too many.
 - 3 sets bush coloured safari outfits (long/shorts/shirts) ie green/brown/dark khaki (not pale fashion khaki/cream/white)
 - 2 sets casual evening clothes (long trousers to reduce insect bites)
 - 1 medium weight sweater (or 2 light).
 - Warm jacket in winter (June/July/early Aug) and a waterproof jacket for the rainy season (November to April)
 - Ladies - we highly recommend a sports bra for the bumpy roads!
 - A good pair of covered shoes for walking (thick soled trainers for camp walks are adequate but light walking boots for walking safaris are recommended).
 - Don't forget your swimming costume – a number of lodges have swimming pools.
- Binoculars: One pair PER PERSON is a must
- Torch: One PER PERSON is a must (with spare batteries)
- Glasses: if you wear prescription glasses bring a spare pair. If you wear contact lenses bring a pair of glasses as well since dust can be a problem.
- Camera equipment: a telephoto lens (200/300mm) / Flash and fast film (400 ASA) for night photography.
 - Lots of film (64,100,200,400 ASA) or flash cards. Camera cleaning equipment and a good dust proof bag.
- Camera and videos - bring spare batteries.
- Medicines & prescriptions: We recommend you contact your local travel clinic or physician for current advise on vaccinations and malaria prophylaxis for your trip. Please remember that it is exceptionally difficult to find certain medicines in Zambia and should you have any personal medicines we suggest you carry a good supply for your trip as hand luggage.
- Gifts for local school children are appreciated. Most lodges and safari operators

are involved in community support projects and rely on donations from their guests to help improve the facilities at local schools and clinics. Please note that this is by no means expected but any support is gratefully accepted. Ulendo would be pleased to provide more information on projects supported by the tourism sector in areas you will be visiting.

**** Each person should have their own pair of binoculars and a torch - sharing binoculars does not work.**

- Cash & Credit Cards: If bringing money, US Dollars are accepted in most places and are required for Visas and other taxes. Be sure to bring the new style bank notes with "large presidents heads" - small heads are not accepted anywhere in Zambia or Malawi. We strongly recommend having a good mix of smaller denominations as change can be hard to find when making payments and these can also be useful for any gratuities you may

wish to pay staff during your stay. US dollars are easier to change than sterling or Euro's. Travellers cheques are accepted at most lodges and hotels but cannot be used to pay any government taxes or visa fees. Credit cards are becoming more widely accepted but not in remote areas and should not be relied on except in major towns. Several lodge and safari operators do not have facilities to accept credit cards. Remember that your itinerary is often on a fully inclusive basis so you should not need to carry large amounts of cash!

THE TRAVEL INFORMATION PROVIDED ABOVE IS INTENDED TO PROVIDE VISITORS WITH A ROUGH GUIDE TO VISITING MALAWI – INFORMATION MAY CHANGE FROM TIME TO TIME AND WE WOULD ENCOURAGE ANY TRAVELLERS TO CONTACT ULENDU SAFARIS OFFICES FOR UPDATED INFORMATION PERTAINING TO THEIR VISIT. THE ULENDU TRAVEL GROUP WILL NOT BE HELD LIABLE FOR ANY OMISSIONS OR ERRORS.