



Pre-Departure Information

Welcome to Your African Overland Tour!

Thank you for booking your tour with **African Overland Tours**. We're excited to welcome you and share this incredible experience with you. Thousands of travellers from around the world have enjoyed our journeys, and with a great attitude, an open mind, and a little preparation, we believe your time on tour will be truly unforgettable, offering an adventure of a lifetime.

For detailed route information, refer to your **Tour Dossier (Itinerary)**, provided by your Travel Consultant. We recommend downloading your dossier 7 days before departure, as these documents are updated regularly. Please note that dossiers are intended as a guideline and may be subject to change.

Remember, you're travelling to Africa! This is a continent of big distances, changing conditions, and spontaneous moments. Standards may differ from those in first-world countries, but that's part of the magic. Plans may occasionally change, but always with the group's best interest in mind. Embrace the unexpected as it's included in the adventure!

With this **Pre-Departure Document**, we aim to give you all the information you need before you travel. Therefore, please read the information below to help prepare for your tour. It includes additional and useful detail: luggage and packing guidelines, meal and dietary details, and other important notes for your trip.

Thank you for choosing African Overland Tours! At the end of your tour, you'll receive a confidential feedback form from your guide. Please place it in a sealed envelope and hand it to your crew.

If you prefer, you can email us directly at info@africanoverlandtours.com. Your feedback is highly valued and helps us keep improving.

We're absolutely thrilled about building our travel community, and we *love* seeing your incredible journey unfold! If you plan to share your tour photos, please connect with us on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/africanoverlandtours/> - and remember to tag us!

If we've missed anything or you need assistance, just reach out as we're here to help.

Regards
The AOT Team



1. Important Confirmation Details

- **Essential Traveler Info:** You must ensure that your booking agent has been provided with your date of birth, nationality, passport number, special dietary requirements (e.g., vegetarian, allergies), and emergency contact details for your next of kin.
- **Tour Confirmation:** If you are not staying at the designated pre-tour departure hotel the night before your trip begins, you must confirm your tour 24 hours prior to departure and provide a local phone number where you can be reached.

2. General Touring Style & Guide Protocol

- **Flexibility is Key:** Adventure travel is unpredictable by nature. Changes to the itinerary may be made due to weather patterns, road conditions, or game migrations. These adjustments are always made for the safety and benefit of the group.
- **Punctuality:** Because you will be traveling through developing countries, the rigid punctuality of first-world environments should not be expected. An open mind and a spontaneous disposition will heavily contribute to your enjoyment.
- **Guide Authority:** The Operator's experienced, qualified, and registered field guides are fully empowered to make operational decisions on the day.

3. Active Group Participation

All overland itineraries operate on a participatory principle. An overland safari is a shared, team adventure, and group members are required or strongly encouraged to assist with daily tasks. These responsibilities include:

- Assisting with food and meal preparation.
- Washing dishes and cleaning utensils.
- Keeping the safari truck clean and tidy.
- Setting up camp and learning how to pitch your own tent (on camping itineraries).

4. Packing & Luggage Requirements

Luggage Constraints

- **Weight Limit:** Luggage is strictly limited to a maximum of 20kg per person.
- **Style of Luggage:** Standard hard-shell suitcases are strongly discouraged as they often do not fit into the truck's storage compartments. You must bring a backpack, barrel bag, or soft-sided duffel suitcase.
- **Storage Lockers:** Each traveler is assigned an individual locker on the truck that remains accessible even while driving. These lockers can be secured with your own padlock.
Locker Dimensions: 60cm (High) x 38cm (Wide) x 88cm (Long/Deep).

Recommended Packing Guide

- Footwear: Sturdy sport shoes, sneakers, or closed trekking shoes, alongside comfortable walking sandals. For rainforest or wet-season itineraries, carry a secondary pair of fast-drying or semi-aquatic shoes.
- Clothing: Long trousers/tracksuits (essential for protection against thorns/insects), casual shorts, T-shirts, a warm jersey/jumper (nights can get freezing), a waterproof windbreaker, and a swimming costume.
- Gear & Accessories: A high-quality insect repellent, sun cream, a wide-brimmed hat, a refillable water bottle, a small daypack for daily excursions, a torch/flashlight, binoculars, and a camera.
- Bedding (Tour-Dependent): On fully accommodated tours, all linen and towels are provided. On camping or basic pioneer itineraries, you must bring your own sleeping bag and small pillow. On camping trips, bringing a thermal insulation sheet/mat to place on top of your stretcher is highly recommended to block the cold from underneath.

5. Travel Documents, Passports & Visas

- Passport Validity: Your passport must be valid for a minimum of 6 months beyond your intended date of return to your home country.
- Blank Pages: All travelers entering or transiting through South Africa are strictly required to have at least two blank facing pages remaining in their passport. For East Africa, your passport must be signed and feature at least two blank pages after all visas are secured.
- Visas: Visa requirements vary heavily by nationality, country of origin, and destination. It is your sole responsibility to secure all required entry visas before departing on tour.
- Minor Regulations (Botswana): Effective via strict border regulations, all minors (children under 18) traveling through Botswana's ports of entry must produce certified copies of unabridged birth certificates alongside their valid passports. If traveling with only one parent, a certified parental consent affidavit from the absent parent is mandatory.
- Document Copies: Make at least two physical photocopies of your passport data page, relevant visas, insurance policies, and flight tickets. Travel with one set stored entirely separate from the originals, and leave the second copy with a trusted contact back home.

6. Financial Guidelines & Bureau de Change

Preferred Currencies & Card Usage

- Southern Africa: The South African Rand (ZAR) and Namibian Dollar (NAD) are used interchangeably on a 1:1 basis within Namibia. Credit cards are widely accepted in major commercial centers, large supermarkets, and established lodges across South Africa and Namibia. However, outside of main hubs (such as rural Botswana or remote outposts), cash is king. Many remote lodges only accept cash for sundry expenses.
- East Africa & Zimbabwe: Cash is heavily favored, with US Dollars (USD) being the preferred currency. Credit cards are not favored in most parts of East Africa; when they are accepted, a surcharge of roughly 5% or more often applies, and you must provide your PIN.

Strict USD Banknote Regulations

If you are relying on US Dollars, banks and immigration officials across East and Southern Africa enforce incredibly strict regulations:

- Only bills dated 2009 or newer are accepted. Any notes printed prior to 2009 will be rejected outright.
- Notes must be the "large head" design variety.
- All bills must be in pristine or excellent condition. Notes that are slightly torn, marked, stamped, excessively crumpled, or soiled will not be accepted under any circumstances. Bring a balanced combination of small denominations (\$1, \$5, \$10, \$20) for daily use alongside larger \$50 and \$100 bills for bulk exchanges.

7. Compulsory Travel Insurance

- **Mandatory Requirement:** It is a strict, non-negotiable requirement that all passengers hold comprehensive travel insurance before being allowed to board the safari vehicle. You will be required to furnish complete policy details directly to your guide before departure.
- **Coverage Extent:** Your policy must explicitly cover every country and territory your designated itinerary passes through. It must provide extensive coverage for personal injury, comprehensive medical expenses, and emergency medical evacuation costs.
- **Evacuation Minimums:** The Operator recommends a minimum evacuation benefit limit of USD 60,000.00 to facilitate emergency transport from remote operational areas in Africa back to a major medical facility in South Africa.

8. Essential Health & Medical Precautions

Required Vaccinations

- **Yellow Fever Certification:** A Yellow Fever vaccination certificate is mandatory if your tour enters East Africa (Kenya/Tanzania/Uganda) or if you are entering South Africa after transiting through a Yellow Fever endemic country for more than 6 hours. The

vaccination must be administered at least 10 days prior to crossing the border. You must travel with your physical medical inoculation card handy.

- Recommended Boosters: It is highly recommended to check that your standard boosters for Polio, Tetanus, Typhoid, and Hepatitis A/B are fully up to date.

Malaria Prophylaxis

- Essential Preventive Medication: Large portions of the tour routes—specifically East Africa, Northern Namibia, Botswana, Zimbabwe, and the Lowveld/Kruger regions of South Africa—are designated malaria risk zones.
- Medical Consultation: You must consult your local travel doctor or general practitioner well in advance to obtain effective medical chemoprophylaxis. Because resistant strains of malaria exist across certain regions, a high-quality prescribed regimen is critical.
- Behavioral Prevention: Prevention is always your best defense. Apply an effective insect repellent to all exposed skin surfaces starting immediately from sunset, and wear lightweight, long-sleeved clothing during evening hours.

Personal Medications

- The safari vehicles are equipped with basic first aid kits intended strictly for emergency use.
- You must pack an adequate supply of your own personal prescription medications, as well as over-the-counter essentials (e.g., headache tablets, anti-diarrheal remedies, cold treatments, or antihistamines). Specific or complex prescription medicines are completely unavailable in remote bush regions.

9. Food, Refreshments & Sundry Expenses

- Meals Provided: Daily meals are provided systematically as outlined in your official trip brochure or booking itinerary. On certain itineraries, meals are not provided on Day 1, allowing the group to stop en-route or gather for an own-expense briefing dinner.
- Beverages: All soft drinks, bottled mineral water, and alcoholic beverages are entirely for your own expense throughout the tour. There will be regular opportunities to stop at local supermarkets or service stations where your guide will advise you to stock up on refreshments for a few days at a time.
- Refillable Bottles: To minimize environmental impact, it is strongly encouraged to bring a sturdy, refillable water bottle to utilize the truck's bulk clean drinking water tanks rather than purchasing single-use plastics.

10. Tipping & Gratuity Guidelines

In Africa, tipping is an integral element of the service industry and is regarded as a fundamental courtesy to reward excellent service. While never forced upon you, it represents a standard thank-you for professional staff whose livelihoods rely on gratuities.

The following industry-standard rule of thumb is recommended across these itineraries:

Service Provider	Recommended Gratuity	Basis
Main Tour Guide(s)	€10.00 to €18.00	Per traveler, per day
Local Site/Game Guides	€2.00 to €3.00	Per traveler, per day
Okavango Delta Polers	Pula 20.00	Per traveler, per day
Communal Lodge/Camp Staff	€5.00 to €10.00	Per traveler, total lump sum via a communal tip jar

11. Important Regional Policies

- **Plastic Bag Bans (East Africa):** Strict environmental legislation is heavily enforced across East Africa, particularly in countries like Kenya. Plastic carrier bags are completely illegal. Do not bring single-use plastic bags into the country in your luggage or hand luggage. Furthermore, luggage is strictly prohibited from being wrapped in commercial airport protective plastic wrap. Violation of these rules risks heavy on-the-spot fines or potential imprisonment.
- **Responsible Photography:** Always respect local cultural norms. You must ask for explicit permission before taking photographs of local people, tribal members, or their private homesteads.
- **Vehicle Power Outlets:** The overland trucks are well-equipped with built-in charging facilities. Devices can be charged daily while the truck is actively driving via an internal 12V-to-220V inverter system. Make sure to bring your standard device cables and appropriate regional wall adapters.

Have an incredible and unforgettable African experience! If you have any further questions as you pack your bags, just let me know.

12. Vehicle Fleet & Technical Specifications

To deliver the ultimate experience across shifting terrains, The Operator utilizes a unique, state-of-the-art fleet of custom-built, highly specialized vehicles. These vehicles are entirely designed and constructed in-house to maintain strict safety and quality standards.

The primary transportation options utilized on these itineraries include:

A. The 4x4 Custom Adventure Truck

This iconic, highly robust vehicle serves as the core of the standard regional expeditions. Built specifically to handle Africa's roughest roads and wild routes, it is engineered for absolute self-sufficiency.

- **Seating Capacity & Layout:** Features a maximum layout of 16 forward-facing, spacious reclining passenger seats to ensure maximum legroom and safety on long drives. One traveler may also sit upfront with the guide.
- **Visual Photography Elements:** Tailored with massive, wide panoramic windows designed to provide unparalleled viewing for scenery and close-range photography.
- **Onboard Infrastructure:** Fully equipped with a built-in masterchef kitchen area, a fold-out catering unit, an onboard refrigerator/freezer, a massive clean drinking water tank, and a secure client safe for locking away personal valuables like passports and money bags.
- **Power Capability:** Features an intelligent inverter charging station equipped with USB ports and standard outlets to keep personal devices powered on the go.



B. Specialized Regional 4x4 Safari Vehicles

For itineraries that head deep into highly challenging and remote biomes, specialized off-road units are strategically selected:

- The Uganda Custom 4x4: Specifically designed and adapted with heavy-duty components to negotiate exceptionally rough terrain and extremely bad roads safely.
- The East African 4x4 Safari Truck: Engineered for the deep mud and loose sand structures of landscapes like Botswana and Tanzania. These vehicles feature an elevated suspension and a higher wheelbase, positioning travelers perfectly off the ground for superior, unobstructed game viewing.



C. The Small Touring Vehicle

Perfect for intimate small-group exploration, this vehicle bridges the gap between rugged overlanding and nimble touring comfort.

- Seating: Converted down to 8 spacious, individual comfort seats.
- Comfort Control: Fully air-conditioned to combat searing summer elements.
- Features: Standardized with sliding panoramic windows, ample lower luggage constraints, a mini fridge for chilled drinks, and matching USB charging ports.

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