

# Zimbabwe

## THINGS TO KNOW BEFORE YOU GO



*Zimbabwe offers so much - friendly people, spectacular scenery and excellent wildlife reserves. A good internal air service on Air Zimbabwe and Zimbabwe Express ensures that the main centres and wildlife areas are easily accessible to the independent traveller, whilst a great variety of accommodation is available, ranging from top class hotels to remote bush lodges.*

*Some 12 percent of Zimbabwe has been given over to National Parks/Game Reserves, with the country's largest National Park being Hwange at 14 620 square kilometers (5645 square miles). Other reserves include the Victoria Falls National Park, Chizarira National Park, Mana Pools National Park and Matusa Dona National Park.*

*The famous Victoria Falls measure some 1 688 m across (5 538 ft), with a drop of 100 m (328 ft). The estimated volume of water going over the falls in the wet season is 545 million litres per minute.*

*The Victoria Falls are Zimbabwe's most famous attraction. Named by the locals as the "Smoke That Thunders" or Musi O'Tunya' these are the largest and probably the most beautiful waterfalls in the world! Lake Kariba is a huge inland sea that boasts over 5 000 square metres of tranquil and beautiful clear waters surrounded by beautiful mountains and a fascinating variety of wildlife and birdlife. It is also a very popular playground for fishing enthusiasts and holiday on-board houseboats. Hwange National Park is another exceptional attraction covering over 14 000 square kilometres of bush. The Park has 482 kilometres of game viewing roads, all leading to areas of outstanding animal concentration and waterholes.*

*The scenic Eastern Highlands offer incredible and intimidating vistas with mountains looming above the tree tops. This is a place of magnificent scenery, fantastic trout fishing, forests and spectacular waterfalls.*

*Bulawayo is Zimbabwe's second largest city and the gateway to the sights of the southwest area. One of the major attractions here is the Matobos National Park, renowned for its wildlife and the burial site of Cecil John Rhodes. The Zambezi Valley is a rugged wilderness teeming with game. It is remote, tough and beautiful, a great valley trapped within the escarpment where the animal is king!*

*Just 30 kilometres south of the town of Masvingo are the most extraordinary man-made ruins in Africa! The towering walls of Great Zimbabwe are indeed an amazing sight!*

### **RECENT HISTORY**

*After the decline of Great Zimbabwe, the fragmented Shona tribes allied themselves and created the Rozwi state and encompassed over half of present day Zimbabwe. This state lasted until 1834 when it was invaded by Ndebele warriors and came under the rule of Lobengula. Lobengula soon found himself having to deal with Cecil Rhodes and the British South Africa Company (BSAC) and signed a contract giving up mineral rights to his land in exchange for guns, ammunition and money. A series of misunderstandings followed this agreement and the Ndebele found themselves fighting the BSAC. In the early 1890's the losing Ndebele allied themselves with the Shona and continued a guerilla war but eventually an agreement was reached to end the fighting. This resulted in the formation of the state of Rhodesia with its white legislature and huge influx of colonists.*

*By 1896, it was apparent to the Shona and Ndebele peoples that the Rhodesian government was not interested in their problems, thus the first Chimurenga (fight for liberation) was begun. Though this resulted in moderate success, it ended only a year later when the leaders were arrested and hanged.*

*The UK annexed Southern Rhodesia from the [British] South Africa Company in 1923. A 1961 constitution was formulated that favored whites in power. In 1965 the government unilaterally declared its independence, but the UK did not recognize the act and demanded more complete voting rights for the black African majority in the country (then called Rhodesia). UN sanctions and a guerrilla uprising finally led to free elections in 1979 and independence (as Zimbabwe) in 1980. Robert MUGABE, the nation's first prime minister, has been the country's only ruler (as president since 1987) and has dominated the country's political system since independence. His chaotic land redistribution campaign, which began in 2000, caused an exodus of white farmers, crippled the economy, and ushered in widespread shortages of basic commodities.*

*During the next 60 years, conflicts between blacks and whites continued. Laws were passed guaranteeing rights to whites and stripping them from blacks. Land was redistributed to whites and working conditions and wages declined. By the late 50's two black political parties, the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) and the Zimbabwe African Peoples Union (ZAPU) had sprung up but just as quickly they were banned and their leaders imprisoned.*

*In 1964 Ian Smith became president and started pressing for independence from Britain. The British imposed strict rules before they would grant independence and they included greater equality for blacks. Since Smith knew the whites would never agree to the conditions, in 1965 he made a Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI). Sanctions imposed by Britain were ignored by most other western countries and the economy of Rhodesia actually improved. Conditions for blacks did not improve however and a resurgence of ZANU & ZAPU guerilla warfare began to strike deeper and deeper. Whites began abandoning their farms. This became known as the second Chimurenga.*

*Smith finally began to realize that something needed to be done. Negotiations between Smith and the black political parties began and broke down. Parties disagreed and fragmented. Years of negotiations continued as did white emigration. Finally in 1979 negotiations in London resulted in the Lancaster House Agreement even though it guaranteed whites (3% of the population) 20% of the seats in parliament.*

*Elections were held in March of 1980 and Robert Mugabe was elected president. Optimism reigned for a while but tensions soon arose. Corruption and scandal threatened the government and rivalries and assassination attempts on government officials occurred on a regular basis. By 1996 Mugabe was embroiled in scandals of his own and in an attempt to retain power he unveiled his land reform program. Land reform in Zimbabwe had long been a topic of discussion as the minority white population owned the vast majority of farm land. The Lancaster House Agreement had stipulated that land transfers would take place with adequate compensation, but as Zimbabwe became deeper involved in helping Congo (Zaire) with their war, less money was available for compensation. In 1998 the government began seizing white owned farms and compensating owners only for improvements made to the land, such as houses, but not for the land itself. Land owners refused to move and this has resulted in some cases of violence where the homeowners were forcibly removed and murders have occurred to intimidate other landowners.*

*In 2002, with elections pending, the European Union (EU) appointed election observers to oversee the process. With negative coverage by the media, parliament passed a law restricting media liberties. Shortly after, the EU team leader was sent home and the EU imposed sanctions on Zimbabwe, joining the World Bank and IMF in their concerns over the disintegrating conditions. Despite this, Mugabe was re-elected, but the election was controversial and marred by scandal. International condemnation was widespread and Zimbabwe was suspended from the Commonwealth. When the suspension was carried over in 2003, Zimbabwe withdrew from the Commonwealth altogether, further alienating the country.*

*The next parliamentary election - in 2005 - was not so close. Mugabe and his security and propaganda networks had five years (since 2000) to readjust the playing field by coercing, manipulating and bribing their way to victory in the farce 'elections' (they even used the time to put Opposition leader Morgan Tsvangirai through two treason trials). Mugabe managed a two-thirds majority and hence won the ability to change Zimbabwe's constitution and pave the way for a successor of his choice. Part of the changes made in the constitution was to create a senate. The senate also saw the acrimonious division of the opposition over whether or not to contest the 'elections'. Mass protests are continually planned against the government, but people appear more concerned with feeding their families than fighting the well-armed state.*

*More than half of the whites, primarily of English origin, arrived in Zimbabwe after World War II. Afrikaners from South Africa and other European minorities, including Portuguese from Mozambique, are also present. Until the mid-1970's, there were about 1,000 white immigrants per year, but from 1976 to 1985 a steady emigration resulted in a loss of more than 150,000, leaving approximately 100,000 in 1992.*

*Primarily of the Bantu group of south and central Africa, the blacks are divided into two major language groups, which are subdivided into several ethnic groups. The Mashona (Shona speakers), who constitute about 75 percent of the population, have lived in the area the longest and are the majority language group and are the ruling class of Zimbabwe. The Matabele (Sindebele speakers), representing about 20 percent of the population and centered in the southwest around Bulawayo, arrived in within the last 150 years. An offshoot of the South African Zulu group, they maintained control over the Mashona until the white occupation of Rhodesia in 1890. There is slight animosity between these two tribes.*

*The Shona people make up about 75% of the population and are the ruling class of Zimbabwe. The Ndebele make up about 16% and occupy the area around Bulawayo and Victoria Falls.*

## **ECONOMY**

*Zimbabwe's temperate climate and abundant natural resources contribute to its ability to sustain itself. Mining accounts for 40% of the exports with gold being primary but coal, copper, nickel and tin are also mined. Agriculture is important with tobacco providing 23% of exports. 66% of Zimbabwe's population depends on agriculture, but it is mostly subsistence farming. The main crops are corn, cotton, wheat, coffee, sugarcane and peanuts. Cattle, sheep, goats and pigs are also raised.*

*Other industries include steel, wood, cement, chemicals & fertilizer. Manufactured goods such as clothing, shoes, leather goods & furniture also contribute to the economy as does tourism.*

*However the government's recent involvement in the war in the Democratic Republic of Congo has depleted millions of dollars from the economy and rising inflation and the highest AIDS infection rate in the world are taxing the economy. This all contributes to an inability to further develop the country's agricultural and mineral resources. Government officials face the difficult task of restraining expenditures in their effort to keep the inflation within bounds.*

## **CULTURE**

*In the southern region of Africa lies a small country that sits between many larger countries. It also has a diverse culture and an uprising in the need for education. They believe education and teamwork is their key to success for the future. This country is Zimbabwe.*

*Their language is English. It isn't predominate in rural areas. Shona and Ndebele are other languages spoken. Many Zimbabweans mix languages in dialects.*

*Since independence, the educational system had been systematically enlarged by the Zimbabwean Government which is committed to providing free public education to all citizens on an equal basis. As of*

*the late 1970s, some 50 percent of the African children (5-19 years old) were listed officially as attending rural schools. Today, most African children attend primary school. Primary through post-secondary enrollment has expanded from 1 million to about 2.9 million since independence. About 40 percent of the rural primary schools were destroyed during the Rhodesian conflict, which delayed improvement of the rural education system. Higher education, offered at the University of Zimbabwe in Harare, the new National University of Science and Technology in Bulawayo, the new Africa (Methodist) University in Mutare, several teacher-training colleges, and three technical institutes, are being expanded with assistance from several donor countries.*

*Most people of Zimbabwe have a mixed belief structure, although Christianity is predominate. Many practices and beliefs are: spiritual doctors, witches, witchcraft, ancestor veneration, and they also practice their religion with the use of totems. Church service is high. 1% of people are Muslims. Roman Catholic is the largest religion.*

*The people of Zimbabwe are known to be friendly, cheerful, and courteous. Most are very friendly when seeing friends on the street, but with strangers it is the complete opposite; very cautious. It is impolite to embarrass someone in public. Family relations are very important. Blacks and white are usually at peace, but once in awhile the blacks are resentful because of inequalities. Zimbabweans tend to spend money quickly and not look towards the future needs. They call this "living for today".*

*The appearance of wealth is highly valued. Not to be wealthy, but to look wealthy. A big stomach is admired in a man because it shows he can afford to eat meat, daily. People wash daily, even in rural areas. Ironing clothes is important. For tumba flies can get onto wet clothes and lay eggs on them. The eggs could hatch and the newborn flies can burrow into the skin. Ironing helps to stop this.*

*Men wear suits for business-like meetings or jobs. Otherwise they prefer to just wear a shirt and slacks. Women are more accustomed to wearing dresses below the knees or a wrap around skirt with a blouse. At a special get together, they might wear a 'dhuku' or a head scarf.*

*When meeting most people shake hands or say a normal greeting. Elders are to be respected. Gestures are a little different than in the states. Items are passed and received with two hands. Women add a curtsy. When people talk women usually sit on mats; men sit on higher platforms or a chair. To make eye contact with an elder is considered rude. Public affection is very rude, but friends of the same sex may hold hands.*

*In villages when other Zimbabweans come to visit they, a lot of the time, come uninvited. Usually bringing some sort of gift for the host. The host will also give a gift to a visitor. If food and refreshments are refused, it's impolite. Guests coming over for tea in the afternoon or for dinner is popular.*

*Breakfast is eaten before going to school or work. Lunch is usually the lightest meal. Dinner is in the evening and is the main meal.*

*Urban people use utensils and rural people use fingers of their right hand. Everyone washes hands before meal with a wash basin that is passed around before and after meals. Drinks aren't given out until after all food is gone. Kids serve water to the adults. Sometimes kids sit at separate tables than adults. When there are guests they get meat. Chicken is the country's favorite meat, but is very expensive.*

*Permission has to be asked to leave the table. Rural families cook over a fire while some have propane stoves. The Zimbabwean diet consists of a stiff porridge made from white cornmeal. This is called sadza. It's served at every meal. The sadza is rolled into a ball and dipped into relish. Vegetables commonly eaten are kale, spinach, pumpkin. Their protein comes from insects, mainly termites, and fish. A "Western Diet" consists of meat, potatoes, and rice instead of sadza. Tea is popular. Many Zimbabweans grow at least some of their own food, even urban people.*

*Fathers are the leaders of the family. They make all decisions and support the family. The mother influences, cares for kids and the house. More and more are selling goods at roadsides. Relatives expect to get money from other relatives during bad times and are expected to share at prosperous times. Urban families are usually not extended and more nuclear. Rural families are much more extended. Elderly people are treated with respect and are considered a family treasure.*

*Generations ago families arranged marriages for their kids. Today the young people choose who they marry. Lobola is a gift given to the bride's father from the groom. It is usually money, paid to him for raising the bride.*

*Extramarital affairs are common for men. If the wives know about it, the men think it's manly.*

*Inside activities include watching TV & movies. When men get together they drink beer, socialize, play games, and dance. When women gather they go to homes and dance or socialize. Vacationing is rare. Only wealthy people visit tourist attractions, while others visit relatives.*

*If you compare Zimbabwe with Canada or USA, they have many of the same holidays, some are: New Year's, Easter, and Christmas. Some of Zimbabwe's other holidays different than our's are the following: Independence Day (April 18), Workers Day (May 1), Africa Day (May 25), Heroes Day and Defense Forces Day (August 11 and 12), and Boxing Day (December 26). They also have other religious holidays.*

## **ARTS**

*Traditional arts in Zimbabwe include pottery, basketry, textiles, jewelry, and carving. Among the distinctive qualities are symmetrically patterned woven baskets and stools carved out of a single piece of wood. Shona sculpture in essence has been a fusion of African folkore with European influences. Also, a recurring theme in Zimbabwean art is the metamorphosis of man into beast.*

*Among members of the white minority communtiy, Theatre has a large following, with numerous theatrical companies performing in Zimbabwe's urban areas.*

*Though the country's art is admired by those that know of its existence, several Zimbabwean artists have managed to gain international acclaim, Among some world-famous Zimbabwean sculptors are Nicholas Nesbert, Anderson Mukomberanwa, Tapfuma Gutsa, Henry Muyradzi & Locardia Ndandarika. Internationally known Zimbabwean sculptors have managed to influence a new generation of artists, particularly Black Americans, through lengthy apprenticeships with master sculptors in Zimbabwe. Contemporary artists like New York sculptor M. Scott Johnson and California sculptor Russel Albans have learned to fuse both African and Afro-diasporic aesthetics in a way that travels beyond the simplistic mimicry of African Art by some Black artists of past generations in the U.S..*

## **SPORT**

*Football is the most popular sport in Zimbabwe, although rugby union and cricket also have a following, traditionally among the white minority. Zimbabwe has won four Olympic medals, one in field hockey at the (boycotted) 1980 Summer Olympics in Moscow, and three in swimming at the 2004 Summer Olympics in Athens.*

*Basketball is gaining fans. Urban people play many sports. Including: tennis, swimming, boxing, rugby, cricket, polo, and others.*

## **LOCATION**

*The country of Zimbabwe is 390,580 sq km and is bordered on all sides by other countries. Zambia lies to the northwest with the Zambezi river and its Victoria Falls forming the border. Mozambique lies to the northeast with its border formed by the Eastern Highlands. Botswana lies to the southwest and South*

Africa to the south (its border formed by the Limpopo River). The central zone of hills gives rise to many rivers, which drain into the man-made Lake Kariba to the northwest, the marshes of Botswana to the west or into the Zambezi River to the northeast.

The northwest portion of the country consists mainly of plateaus interspersed with giant granite outcroppings (many of these are covered with rock art from the early San people). The northeast is where the Eastern Highlands with their forests and lakes lie. The southern portion of the country consists of the level savannah of the Save Basin.

The Area below 600 m is known as the lowveld, where conditions tend to be drier and hotter, with less than 40 cm of rain per annum, whereas the Eastern Highlands receive 150 cm of rain, and the highveld from 70 to 90 cm per annum.

## **FLORA & FAUNA**

The diversity of the animal kingdom in Zimbabwe is evident in the 300 species of mammals that live there. You can find everything from elephant, lion, buffalo and leopard to shrew, bat, porcupine and pangolin. These can be found in the country's 40 wildlife parks and private sanctuaries. Unfortunately the black rhino has been wiped out due to poaching but fortunately the other animals are being protected by ecologists and conservationists.

Other mammals include hippopotamus, rhinoceros, gorilla, chimpanzee, baboon, okapi, giraffe, kudu, duiker, eland, sable, gemsbok, waterbuck, zebra, warthog, lynx, aardvark, fox, badger, otter, hare, and scaly anteater.

There are 153 reptile species including snakes, tortoises, lizards. The largest lizard, the water monitor, is found in many rivers, as are several species of crocodile. There are also 640 species of birds including 17 species of eagle and ant-thrush, barbet, bee-eater, bishop bird, bulbul, bush-warbler, drongo, emerald cuckoo, grouse, gray lourie & pheasant. There are 131 species of fish including the fighting tigerfish of Lake Kariba which can reach a size of 33lbs. There are even several hundred species of spiders.

All of these animals are dependent upon having enough food, water and shelter which Zimbabwe's fauna helps to provide. The central plateau with its abundant rainfall supports msasa, munonodo and acacia trees which average 20ft tall. Other trees include teak and mahogany, knobthorn, baobab, aloes, cycads and palms.

The country is mostly savanna, although the moist and mountainous east supports tropical evergreen and hardwood forests.. Among the numerous flowers and shrubs are hibiscus, spider lily, leonotus, cassia, tree wisteria, and dombeya.

Tobacco is the largest foreign currency earner, and Zimbabwe is the world's third largest exporter (after Brazil and the United States). However, mineral resources include gold, asbestos, nickel, iron-ore, coal and copper

## **POPULATION**

There are 11 million people living in Zimbabwe today. The largest group of them are the Shona people (comprising 71% of the population.) They are descendents from the San and Bantu and live mostly in the north, center and eastern portions of the country. The Ndebele people comprise 16% of the population and live in the western portion of the country. Other ethnic groups including the Tonga, the Shangaan and the Venda make up 11% of the people, with the remaining 2% being of European or Asian descent. A third of the people live in the cities, with the remainder living in rural areas.

## **RELIGION**

Religion plays an important role in Zimbabwe as it does in most southern African countries. A mixture of traditional beliefs and Christianity is the preference of 50% of the population. However like most former European colonies, Christianity is often mixed with indigenous beliefs. This blending of beliefs called syncretism combines beliefs such as ancestor worship (the belief that prayers to ancestors will affect outcomes), animism (the belief that all objects such as trees and mountains have spiritual power) and the use of mediums with traditional Christian beliefs. 25% of the population are traditional Christians while 24% have solely indigenous beliefs. The remaining 1% are Muslim and other beliefs.

Besides Christianity, the Mwari cult is the most practiced non-Christian religion which involves ancestor worship and spiritual intercession. Mwari is an unknown supreme being that communicates with humans through a cave dwelling oracle known as the Voice of Mwari.

## **LANGUAGES**

English is the official language of Zimbabwe though only two per cent consider it their native language, mainly the white and Coloured (mixed race) minorities. The rest of the population speak Bantu languages like Shona (76 per cent) and Ndebele (18 per cent) with numerous but minor tribal dialects. Shona has a rich oral tradition, which was incorporated into the first Shona novel, *Feso* by Solomon Mutswairo, published in 1957. English is spoken primarily in the cities, but less so in rural areas.

The literacy rate is estimated at 70%. Primary and secondary schools were segregated until 1979 when racial restrictions were removed.

## **CLIMATE**

Zimbabwe is an all year round destination. It's popularity as a destination is gaining in leaps and bounds to the extent that seasonal differences are not as marked as in previous years. Traditionally, however, peak season is from July - October and middle season is from May - June. These are the most comfortable times for travelling, but it is during the wet summer, from October - April, when the landscapes are a striking, fresh green. However, the abundance of water means that it is less certain that wildlife can be seen at perennial water holes.

As Zimbabwe is south of the equator, the seasons are in reverse to those in the northern hemisphere with mid summer in Christmas and winter lasting from May to August.

## **VISA**

The following information on entry requirements has been confirmed with the Zimbabwean authorities. However, these requirements are subject to change at any time. It is the traveller's responsibility to check with the **Embassy of the Republic of Zimbabwe** for up-to-date information.

All Canadian & United States citizens must be in possession of a visa to enter Zimbabwe. Tourists can apply for an extension at the nearest immigration office, but renewal is not automatic. Single-entry visas can be obtained at the point of entry at a cost of US\$ 75. Multiple-entry visas can be obtained only at Zimbabwean missions overseas. Requirements for obtaining a visa are a valid passport and one application form.

## **DEPARTURE TAX**

There is a US\$ 30 Departure Tax for passengers travelling from Victoria Falls airport. Tax needs to be paid in cash before embarking on your departing flight.

## **HEALTH REQUISITES**

Health requirements can change at any time . The Public Health Agency of Canada strongly recommends that your travel plans include contacting a **travel medicine clinic** or physician six to eight weeks before departure. Based on your individual risk assessment, a health care professional can determine your need for **immunizations** and/or preventive medication and advise you on precautions to avoid disease. Travelers are reminded to ensure that their routine (childhood) immunizations (e.g., tetanus, diphtheria, polio & measles) are upto date.

There are no mandatory health requirements for travel to Zimbabwe. Any person entering Zimbabwe from, or via, a yellow fever or cholera infected area must be in possession of a valid International Certificate of Vaccination against Yellow Fever and/or cholera.

It is imperative that you obtain malaria prophylactics before entering Zimbabwe. When purchasing these, please tell your doctor or pharmacist which areas in Zimbabwe you intend visiting. Start your course at least 24 hours before entering Zimbabwe and continue taking the pills for 6 weeks after leaving the country. If you suffer from side effects, try taking your malaria prophylactics at night, after dinner as this usually minimises the effect of the symptoms. Precautionary measures that you can take to prevent contact with mosquitoes are: sleeping under a bed net or in a room/tent with mosquito proofing (remember to keep the flaps zipped at all times); spraying your accommodation with insecticide; making use of a mosquito-repelling lotion or stick; and wearing long-sleeved clothing, long trousers and socks when outside at night.

Throughout Zimbabwe at the hotels, inns, lodges & other public places, tap water is perfectly safe to drink.

Please be aware of the following :

#### **BILHARZIA**

Avoid swimming in dams and rivers as the water may be infected with bilharzia. There are usually warning signs indicating that swimming is not allowed in the particular affected rivers or streams. If you are canoeing or rafting and cannot avoid the water, this is not a problem - just remember to towel off as soon as possible. Tap water is perfectly safe to drink and only in extremely remote areas is it necessary to boil or purify the water.

#### **CHOLERA**

Vaccination against cholera is not required. Tetanus immunisation is recommended.

#### **MALARIA**

Malaria is caused by the bite of an infected mosquito and is endemic (transmission occurs throughout the year) in certain areas of Zimbabwe. Visitors are advised to take a course of anti-malaria tablets, containing both CHLOROQUIN and PYRIMETHAMINE. These tablets are obtainable from any chemist (drug store) in South Africa, inexpensively. The tablets can be taken 24 hours before entering the malaria affected area (preferably at bedtime) and then on a weekly basis for a maximum of five to six weeks.

Please note that blood donors will be unable to donate blood for at least 2 years after taking anti-malaria tablets. If any doubt exists, a local physician should be consulted.

#### **SMALLPOX**

Vaccination against smallpox is not required.

### **MEDICAL SERVICES**

Zimbabwe does not have a national health welfare scheme. It is therefore advisable to obtain medical insurance prior to arrival. It is also wise to bring with you, any medicines which you may require since you will not have access to pharmacies in many of the areas which you may be visiting. Medical services

*within Harare and Bulawayo are very good, but outside of these facilities are scarce. Bring any medicines you may require with you. Note that in some parts doctors often expect cash payment.*

### **TIME**

*2 hours ahead of Greenwich Mean Time, one hour ahead of Central European Time and seven hours ahead of Eastern Standard Time, USA.*

### **INTERNATIONAL TELEPHONE DIAL CODE**

*The international dialling code for Zimbabwe is +263. The outgoing code is 00 followed by the relevant country code (e.g. 0027 for South Africa). International Direct Dialling is available. City / area codes are in use, e.g. (0)4 for Harare. Telecel, Econet and Net\*One operators provide GSM 900 network mobile phone coverage in most cities, towns and tourist areas throughout the country.*

### **CURRENCY**

*Zimbabwe's currency is Zimbabwean dollar (ZWD or Z\$) which is divided into 100 cents. The current rate of exchange (June 2010) is 1 Canadian Dollar = 18564120866 Zimbabwe Dollar approximately.*

*Notes are in denominations of Z\$100, 50, 20, 10, 5 and 2. Coins are in denominations of Z\$5, 2 and 1, and 50, 20, 10, 5 and 1 cents.*

*The Government of Zimbabwe has recently devalued the Zimbabwean dollar and deducted three zeros from the currency. 1,000,000 old Zimbabwean dollars (issued as bearer cheques) are now worth 1,000 new Zimbabwean dollars (bearer cheques).*

*Major foreign currencies can be exchanged at bureaux de change, banks and major hotels at the official exchange rate. Banks and major hotels will exchange Travellers Cheques. To avoid additional exchange rate charges, travelers are advised to take traveller's cheques in US Dollars or Pounds Sterling.*

*All major credit cards are accepted at hotels, shops and restaurants. However, please note that certain lodges and restaurants do not accept payment by Diners or American Express. Credit cards are not accepted at petrol filling stations.*

*Banking Hours : Mon - Tues and Thurs - Fri 0800-1500, Wed 0800-1300 and Sat 0800-1130.*

### **ELECTRICITY**

*Power supply is 220/240 volt AC 50 Hz in most parts of the country. Adapters are usually available on loan at major hotels in Zimbabwe. Be certain, however, to bring along transformers where needed. Although some stores in major cities carry transformers, they are not readily available. Three to five star hotels usually have 110 volt outlets for electric shavers in bathrooms. An NW 4 plug with two prongs, 0,19 inches in diameter is required for compatibility.*

### **CLOTHING**

*Elegant casual outfit for dinner and/or cocktails at the smarter hotels and restaurants - men are generally expected to don collar, jacket (sometimes even a tie) in cocktail bars and restaurants after 18:30, except in the warmer parts of the country and at the game lodges.*

*Layers are most practical for the fluctuating day/night temperatures of Zimbabwe. Dull and/or neutral colours are more suitable for safari, white is not practical. It is best to pack hardy, durable clothing.*

*If you are travelling with an organised safari, it is important to check what your weight limit is. Generally you will need to restrict your luggage to 10-12 kg (packed in a soft bag) plus a reasonable amount of camera equipment.*

*Generally, casual comfortable clothing is suitable throughout the year. The most practical items to pack for safari are:*

- *blouses with long sleeves (even in summer, they will protect you from the sun and from mosquitoes)*
- *T-shirts*
- *shorts or a light skirt*
- *jeans or trousers for evenings and cooler days*
- *fleece or sweater and a warm jacket for game drives (necessary, even in summer)*
- *comfortable walking shoes*
- *sun block, sunglasses, hat, insect repellent - essentials!*
- *binoculars and a camera are a must*
- *track suit - good for sleeping in during winter months*
- *light, compact raincoat is a good idea for the summer*
- *swimsuit, as most hotels/lodges have swimming pools*
- *towel, torch and sleeping bag for camping safaris (sleeping bags can be hired from most safari operators)*

## **FOOD**

*Like in many African countries, a majority of Zimbabweans depend on staple foods. Mealie meal, or cornmeal as it is known in other parts of the world, is used to prepare bota, a porridge made by mixing the cornmeal with water, to make a thick paste. This is usually flavored with peanut butter, milk, butter, and/or sometimes even jam. Bota is usually eaten for breakfast. Cornmeal is also used to make sadza, which is usually eaten for dinner, and by many for lunch too. The process of making sadza is similar to bota, however after the paste has been cooking for several minutes, more cornmeal is added to thicken the paste until it is hard. This meal is usually served with vegetables, (spinach, collard greens, grapes, etc.), and beans or meat that is either stewed or grilled or roasted. Sadza is also commonly eaten with curdled milk commonly known as lacto (mikaka wakakora). On special occasions rice and chicken with coleslaw salad is often served as the main meal. Graduations, weddings and any other family gatherings will usually be celebrated with the killing of a goat or cow, which will be braaied (or barbecued) for the gathered family.*

*Since Zimbabwe was a British colony, they have adopted some English habits. For example, most people will have porridge in the morning, however they will still have 10 o'clock tea (midday tea). They will have lunch, which can be left-overs from the night before, freshly cooked sadza, or sandwiches (which is more common in the cities). After lunch there is usually 4 o'clock tea that is served before dinner. It is not uncommon for tea to be had after a dinner either.*

*Restaurant guides are available from most publicity associations. The concierge at hotels are also up-to-date with restaurants as well as local newspapers.*

## **SHOPPING**

*Most shops open between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. Monday to Friday; mornings only on Saturday & closed on Sunday. Cafes (delis) stay open until late and generally close only on major religious holidays. Some pharmacies are open 24 hours in the main centres and also stock basic foodstuffs, soft drinks, cigarettes, newspapers and magazines. Sales Tax is charged at 15 cent on the Dollar on everything except certain basic commodities. It is applicable to meals served in hotels & restaurants.*

Zimbabweans tend to have the same times of service for stores. They are usually open from 8 A.M. to 5 P.M. Saturdays stores are open until around noon. Some shops are open on Sundays.

### **TIPPING**

Tips of 10% are usually expected by taxi drivers and at hotels. Service charge is often included in a bill, but when not, a 10% tip is acceptable.

### **SECURITY**

Seasoned travellers know the potential pitfalls when leaving valuables unattended or strolling down dark and lonely alleys in cities anywhere in the world.

Unfortunately, petty thievery and more serious crime is also a factor in Zimbabwe. Take the same precautions as you would in any major city.

There has also been a general increase in the level of violent crime. There is a heightened risk of violence at political demonstrations and rallies particularly in the high density areas and the Central Business District of Harare, but main tourist areas have been largely unaffected by political and social unrest.

It is strongly advised against visiting high density, low income, urban suburbs. During the current disturbances these areas are subject to curfews and are patrolled by riot police and other militias who have been reported to be using violence against people found on the streets. Sudden unpredictable violence is likely.

Here are a few universal rules:

- ✓ Don't walk alone in apparently deserted areas, especially in and around the cities. It is preferable and usually more enjoyable to walk with company or in groups.
- ✓ Don't carry large sums of cash in your purse or pocket.
- ✓ Be aware of the possibility of pick-pockets and bag snatchers in crowded areas.
- ✓ Don't leave valuables in a hotel room. Most of them offer safety deposit lock services.
- ✓ Make photocopies of the first few pages of your passport, air ticket and other important travel documents. These should obviously be in safe-keeping separate from the originals and will help towards expediting replacement in case of loss or theft.
- ✓ Be certain that you have adequate insurance coverage.

### **USEFUL PHRASES:**

*English* - Shona Ndebele

*Hello (initial)* - Mhoro/Mhorozi Sawubona/Salibonani

*Hello (in reply)* - Ahoi Yebo

*How are you?* - Makadii/Makadi-ni? Linjani/Kunjani?

*I'm well* - Ndiripo Sikona

*Thank you* - Ndatenda/Masvita Siyabonga kakula

*Welcome* - Titambire Siyalemukela

*Good morning* - Mangwanani Livukenjani

*Good afternoon* - Masikati Litshonile

*Good evening* - Manheru Litshone njani

*Goodbye (to person staying)* - Chisarai zvakanaka Lisalekuhle

*Goodbye (to person leaving)* - Fambai zvakanaka Uhambe kuhle

*Please* - Ndapota Uxolo

*Excuse me* - Pamsoro.ipindeo Ngicela ukwedlula

*Sorry/pardon* - Pamsoro Ngiyaxolisa

*Do you speak English?* - Unodziva kutawura chirungu? Uyakwazi ukukuluma isilingu?

*Yes* - Ehe Yebo

No - Aiw Hayi  
Where is . . .? - Arikiupi . . . ? Ungaphi . . . ?

## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

### **Will I need a visa?**

All Canadian & US citizens must be in possession of a visa to enter Zimbabwe. Tourists can apply for an extension at the nearest immigration office, but renewal is not automatic. Single-entry visas can be obtained at the point of entry at a cost of US\$ 75. Multiple-entry visas can be obtained only at Zimbabwean missions overseas. Requirements for obtaining a visa are a valid passport and one application form.

### **When is the best time to go?**

Zimbabwe is great all year long. It's popularity as a destination is gaining in leaps and bounds to the extent that seasonal differences are not as marked as in previous years. Traditionally, however, peak season is from July - October and middle season is from May - June. These are the most comfortable times for travelling, but it is during the wet summer, from October - April, when the landscapes are a striking, fresh green. However, the abundance of water means that it is less certain that wildlife can be seen at perennial water holes.

### **How strong is the sun?**

The sun throughout Zimbabwe is very strong all year round. Travelers are advised to wear sunscreen with an SPF of at least 15 and more if you sunburn easily.

### **What kind of photo equipment should I bring?**

When visiting other countries, it may be fine to bring along any kind of camera but travelers need a good camera to accurately record their experiences. Disposable cameras just don't do the landscape justice, and you won't be able to effectively capture the action without a telephoto lens. Most experts recommend a 200 mm SLR camera with a zoom lens. They also prefer slower Fuji film (either 50 or 100 ASA), which gives almost perfect quality photos in normal light.

### **What are the medical facilities like?**

Zimbabwe does not have a national health welfare scheme. It is therefore advisable to obtain medical insurance prior to arrival. It is also wise to bring with you, any medicines which you may require since you will not have access to pharmacies in many of the areas which you may be visiting. Medical services within Harare and Bulawayo are very good, but outside of this facilities are scarce. Bring any medicines you may require with you. Tourists are advised to visit private hospitals if one can be found, in the event of an emergency and are expected to pay cash for medical services rendered.

### **Should I get travel insurance?**

Yes. Most medical facilities require cash for services rendered, and many health plans in the U.S. will not reimburse expenses incurred out of the country. Check with your health plan well before traveling.

### **How are the roads?**

All major roads and highways in Zimbabwe are excellent. Some of the back roads aren't as well maintained, so care should be taken while driving on them. Driving in Zimbabwe occurs on the left-hand side of the road, and the speed limit is 75 miles per hour. Be on the look out for animals in the bush and in rural areas.

### **Can I direct dial my phone calls and use my own long distance service?**

Long distance calls can be direct dialed by using the appropriate country code AT&T, MCI, and Sprint all make calling long distance relatively easy, but you may find the local access number blocked in many hotel rooms. A way around this problem is to ask the hotel operator to connect you to the access number instead of placing the call through the hotel operator. Please check with Bell for Canadian calling.

**What can I expect at the airport when I leave?**

Upon departure, you will have to pay Departure Tax of US\$ 30.00 in cash. Please make sure you have the exact amount.

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