

AFRICA · OFF THE BEATEN PATH · ROAD TRIPS · BEACHES · ADVENTURE



Angola

Kalandula Falls pours over a 400-metre-wide horseshoe of rock in Angola's interior, yet few outsiders have heard of it. Add the Tundavala Gap's sheer escarpment, the hairpin bends of Serra da Leba and a long, empty Atlantic coastline. Roads and services thin out fast beyond Luanda, so this is a country for patient, well-planned travel.

 **The UK Foreign Office (FCDO) advises against all but essential travel to parts of Angola.**
Read the latest FCDO travel advice before planning a trip. Your travel insurance may be invalid if you travel against FCDO advice.
FCDO advice last updated 28 May 2026.

 CAPITAL Luanda	 CURRENCY Angolan kwanza (AOA) £1 ≈ AOA 1,266	 LANGUAGE Portuguese, Umbundu Kimbundu, Kikongo	 BEST TIME May-Sep
 DAILY BUDGET £55-£280 ££ Moderate	 PLUGS Type C, F 220V · adapter needed	 FLIGHT FROM LONDON 12h 30m via Lisbon or Dubai ~£650-£1,150 return	 TIME ZONE UTC+1 standard time

Angola is huge – five times the size of the UK – and most of it sees almost no foreign tourists. A first trip usually starts in Luanda, an oil-boom capital of high-rises, a Portuguese fortress and beach bars on the Ilha, then splits two ways. East lies Malanje province, with Kalandula Falls and the black boulders of Pungo Andongo. South, a short flight away, is Lubango on the cool Huíla plateau, the springboard for the Tundavala Gap, the Serra da Leba road and the desert coast around Namibe, where welwitschia plants grow in the northern Namib. Benguela and Lobito add colonial architecture and calmer beaches.

Travel here takes effort and money. Luanda's hotels and restaurants are priced for oil-industry expense accounts, although the kwanza's slide since 2018 has softened costs for visitors bringing hard currency. Outside the capital English is rare and Portuguese goes a long way; long-distance buses are cheap but slow, and many visitors hire a driver or join a specialist tour for the south. The rewards are landscapes with nobody else in them and a warm, music-loving culture – semba and kizomba were born here. It suits experienced travellers who are comfortable improvising.

Top 5 highlights

- 1

NATURE

Kalandula Falls

Around 400 metres wide and 105 metres high, the Lucala River's falls are among Africa's largest. Come at the end of the rainy season, around April or May, when the curtain of water is at its fullest.
- 2

NATURE

Tundavala Gap

Near Lubango the Huíla plateau simply ends: from a rim more than 2,200 metres above sea level, cliffs plunge about 1,000 metres to the plains below. Go early, before cloud rolls in.

3

ADVENTURE

Serra da Leba Pass

The road from Lubango to Namibe corkscrews off the escarpment in a famous ladder of tight hairpin bends. Stop at the viewpoint at the top, then drive down towards the desert coast.

4

WILDLIFE

Kissama National Park

About 70 kilometres south of Luanda across the Kwanza River, Angola's most accessible park was restocked with elephants and other game from Botswana and South Africa after the civil war. Easily visited from the capital.

5

NATURE

Miradouro da Lua

Forty kilometres south of Luanda, wind and rain have carved the coastal cliffs into eroded pinnacles of red, ochre and cream. Come in the late afternoon, when low sun sets the 'Moon Viewpoint' glowing.

Biggest cities

LARGEST CITY

Luanda

≈ 10.2 million people

A chaotic, expensive capital that rewards a few days: the Fortaleza de São Miguel, the Marginal seafront promenade, the Ilha's beach restaurants and the National Slavery Museum south of town.

2ND LARGEST CITY

Benguela

≈ 1.1 million people

Benguela and neighbouring Lobito form Angola's second urban area: pastel colonial streets, the beaches of Baía Azul and the Atlantic end of the Benguela Railway, which runs inland to the Congolese border.

3RD LARGEST CITY

Huambo

≈ 910,000 people

Named Nova Lisboa in colonial times and once planned as Angola's capital, Huambo sits high on the central plateau; badly scarred in the civil war, it is now a pleasant stopover.

Ranked by urban area at the 2024 census, with Benguela and neighbouring Lobito counted as one conurbation. Counted as single cities, Lubango and Cabinda would come second and third.

When to go to Angola

Best time: **May-Sep.**

Jan

Feb

Mar

Apr

May

Jun

Jul

Aug

Sep

Oct

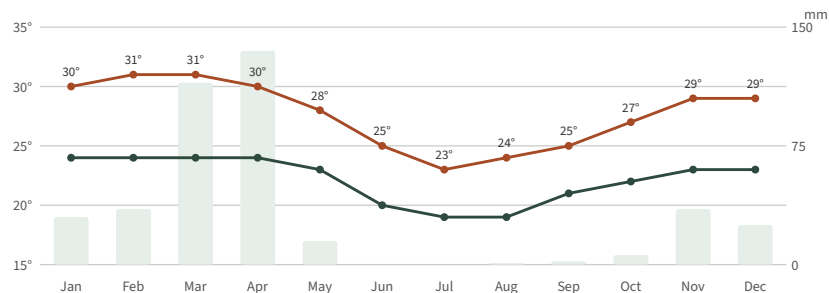
Nov

Dec

■ Best ■ Good ■ Mixed ■ Poor

Average climate in Luanda

— High °C — Low °C ■ Rain (mm)



Festivals & events

Feb–Mar	Carnaval de Luanda Neighbourhood dance groups in elaborate costume parade along the Marginal, competing with semba and other traditional rhythms in a carnival with deep roots in the city.
Aug	Festas da Senhora do Monte Lubango's August festival centres on the hilltop sanctuary of Nossa Senhora do Monte, with a pilgrimage, fairground, concerts and markets drawing visitors from across the south.

How much does Angola cost?

SHOESTRING £55 per person / day ≈ AOA 69,609 hostels, street food, buses	MID-RANGE £130 per person / day ≈ AOA 164,530 3-star hotels, restaurants, some taxis	COMFORTABLE £280 per person / day ≈ AOA 354,372 4-star+, guided trips, private transfers
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Estimates per person per day, excluding flights. Prices vary by season and city.

Food to try

Muamba de galinha Chicken stewed in red palm-oil sauce with garlic, okra and squash, served with funge; Angola's national dish and a Sunday-lunch staple.	Funge A smooth, stretchy porridge of cassava flour (or maize in the south), eaten by hand as the base for almost every stew.	Calulu Dried and fresh fish simmered in palm oil with tomato, onion, sweet-potato leaves and okra, usually served with funge and beans.
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Getting around

TAAG flies from Luanda to Lubango, Catumbela (for Benguela and Lobito) and other provincial cities, which saves days on the road. Long-distance coaches link the main towns cheaply but slowly, and the Benguela, Moçâmedes and Luanda railways run limited passenger services. In Luanda, blue-and-white candongueiro minibuses are crowded and confusing, so most visitors use ride-hailing apps or a hired driver. For the south's back roads, a 4x4 with a driver is the practical choice.

Practical information

PLUGS & VOLTAGE  C F 220V — bring a UK-to-C/F adapter	EMERGENCY NUMBERS Ambulance: 112 Fire: 118 Police: 110 Source: FCDO “Getting help”
DIALLING CODE +244	TIME ZONE UTC+1 (standard time)
TAP WATER Not safe — drink bottled or treated water	DRIVING On the right

TIPPING

Not obligatory, but around 10 per cent is appreciated in sit-down restaurants; round up for drivers and tip guides directly.

ETIQUETTE

Greet everyone with a handshake and a 'bom dia' before getting down to business. Never photograph government buildings, police, soldiers or the presidential palace – officials take it seriously.

MAIN AIRPORTS

Dr António Agostinho Neto International Airport (NBJ), Luanda

Visas & entry for Angola

Shown for a British passport.

No visa needed

You do not need a visa to visit Angola for up to 30 days, if visiting for tourism.

If travelling for work, study or business, you must get a visa in advance. If you do not have a visa, or if you have the wrong visa, you may be stopped from boarding or detained at the airport on arrival. Angola's deportation process can take a long time.

From the UK government's FCDO entry requirements for British passport holders — read the full page for passport validity, permits and exceptions.

Health & vaccinations



See a travel health nurse, GP or travel clinic **6–8 weeks before you go**. Make sure routine UK vaccinations (such as MMR and diphtheria-tetanus-polio) are up to date.

RECOMMENDED FOR MOST TRAVELLERS

Hepatitis A Tetanus Typhoid Yellow fever

SOMETIMES ADVISED — DEPENDS ON YOUR TRIP, ACTIVITIES AND HEALTH

Chikungunya Dengue Hepatitis B Measles Polio Rabies Tuberculosis

YELLOW FEVER CERTIFICATE

No yellow fever certificate is required to enter. There is a risk of yellow fever in parts of the country — vaccination may be advised.

MALARIA

High risk of malaria

- There is a high risk of malaria in Angola: antimalarial tablets recommended.

Source: TravelHealthPro (National Travel Health Network and Centre), checked 21 October 2026. This is a summary, not medical advice.

Public holidays in Angola

The next 12 months. Banks, offices and some sights may close, and transport and hotels get busy around these dates.

Mon 2 Nov 2026

All Souls' Day

Wed 11 Nov 2026

National Independence Day

Fri 25 Dec 2026	Christmas and Family Day
Fri 1 Jan 2027	New Year's Day
Thu 4 Feb 2027	Liberation Movement Day
Fri 5 Feb 2027	Day off for Liberation Movement Day
Mon 8 Feb 2027	Day off for Carnival Day
Tue 9 Feb 2027	Carnival Day
Mon 8 Mar 2027	International Women's Day
Mon 22 Mar 2027	Day off for Southern Africa Liberation Day
Tue 23 Mar 2027	Southern Africa Liberation Day
Fri 26 Mar 2027	Good Friday
Sun 4 Apr 2027	Peace and National Reconciliation Day
Sat 1 May 2027	International Worker's Day
Fri 17 Sep 2027	National Heroes' Day

National holidays only. Dates based on lunar calendars can move by a day or two depending on official announcements.

Useful phrases in Portuguese

ENGLISH	PORTUGUESE	SAY IT
Hello	Olá	<i>oh-LAH</i>
Thank you	Obrigado / Obrigada	<i>oh-bree-GAH-doo / oh-bree-GAH-dah</i>
Please	Por favor	<i>poor fah-VOR</i>
Excuse me	Com licença	<i>kong lee-SEN-sah</i>
How much is this?	Quanto custa?	<i>KWAN-too KOOS-tah</i>

Know before you go

Bring US dollars or euros in clean, recent notes and change them at banks or official bureaux; foreign cards fail at many ATMs, so never rely on plastic alone.

Carry your yellow fever vaccination certificate, as proof of vaccination is required on entry, and read the FCDO travel advice and health guidance before you book.

Keep your passport or a certified copy on you, stay patient at police checkpoints, and allow plenty of time for the drive to Luanda's new airport, about 40 kilometres out.

Visa, health and safety rules change. Before you book or travel, check the FCDO travel advice (gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice) and TravelHealthPro (travelhealthpro.org.uk). Costs are estimates. © 2026 Pick My Trip.