

AFRICA · WILDLIFE · ADVENTURE · OFF THE BEATEN PATH

 Zambia

Zambia is a safari country for purists: walking safaris were pioneered in South Luangwa, canoe trips glide past elephants on the Lower Zambezi, and Kafue National Park covers an area larger than Wales. Victoria Falls thunders on the Zimbabwe border, and from late October millions of fruit bats fill the skies over Kasanka.

 Before you go, read the UK government's travel advice for Zambia and entry requirements (visas, passport validity). Last updated by FCDO 1 June 2026.

 CAPITAL Lusaka	 CURRENCY Zambian kwacha (ZMW) £1 ≈ ZMW 26.97	 LANGUAGE English, Bemba Nyanja, Tonga	 BEST TIME Jun–Oct
 DAILY BUDGET £45–£400 £££ Expensive	 PLUGS Type C, D, G 230V · UK plugs fit	 FLIGHT FROM LONDON 14h via Johannesburg, Nairobi, Addis Ababa or Dubai ~£750–£1,300 return	 TIME ZONE UTC+2 standard time

Zambia is a landlocked plateau drained by the Zambezi and Luangwa rivers, and its national parks are among Africa's least crowded. Most trips combine two or three: South Luangwa for walking safaris and leopards, the Lower Zambezi for canoeing among hippos and elephants, and Kafue for sheer scale, finishing at Livingstone and Victoria Falls. Light aircraft link the parks with Lusaka, so a typical itinerary flies in, spends three or four nights in each camp, and saves the falls for the end. Remote North Luangwa, Liuwa Plain and the Bangweulu Wetlands reward return visits.

Safari Zambia is not cheap: good bush camps charge all-inclusive rates in US dollars, and park fees and flights add up. Independent travellers can still do it for less by taking buses to Chipata for Mfuwe, using community campsites and self-driving, especially around Livingstone and South Luangwa. The payoff is quality — expert guides, small camps and game drives without convoys of vehicles. People are often surprised by how hot October gets, how green the parks turn in the rains, and how friendly and relaxed Zambians are.

Top 5 highlights

1

NATURE

Victoria Falls (Mosi-oa-Tunya)

The Zambezi plunges over a 1.7 km basalt lip into a narrow gorge, throwing up spray visible for miles. Walk the Knife-Edge Bridge from Livingstone, and at low water swim in Devil's Pool on the brink.

2

WILDLIFE

South Luangwa National Park

Where the walking safari was pioneered: oxbow lagoons and ebony groves along the Luangwa River hold dense populations of leopard, hippo, elephant and Thornicroft's giraffe, a local subspecies. Night drives are permitted.

3

ADVENTURE

Lower Zambezi National Park

Facing Zimbabwe's Mana Pools across the Zambezi, this park is best explored by canoe, drifting past elephants, buffalo and hippos, with tiger fishing and boat safaris from riverside camps.

4

WILDLIFE

Kafue National Park

Zambia's oldest and largest national park. In the north, the Busanga Plains flood into a wetland of red lechwe, lions and cheetahs; the south suits self-drivers around Lake Itzhi-Tezhi.

5

WILDLIFE

Kasanka bat migration

From late October to December, around ten million straw-coloured fruit bats roost in a small patch of swamp forest in Kasanka National Park, swarming out at dusk in what is often called the world's largest mammal migration.

Biggest cities

LARGEST CITY

Lusaka

≈ 3.1 million people

The fast-growing capital is mostly a transit hub, but Lusaka National Park's white rhinos, Kabwata Cultural Village's crafts and good restaurants fill a spare day.

2ND LARGEST CITY

Kitwe

≈ 662,000 people

The Copperbelt's largest city grew around huge copper mines; few visitors stop, though it is the gateway to the Chimfunshi chimpanzee sanctuary near Chingola.

3RD LARGEST CITY

Ndola

≈ 625,000 people

The Copperbelt's provincial capital and commercial centre, with a new international airport; a memorial marks the 1961 crash site of UN secretary-general Dag Hammarskjöld's plane.

Ranked by urban-area population where available. Figures are rounded estimates, and sources define city limits differently, so rankings of similar-sized cities can vary.

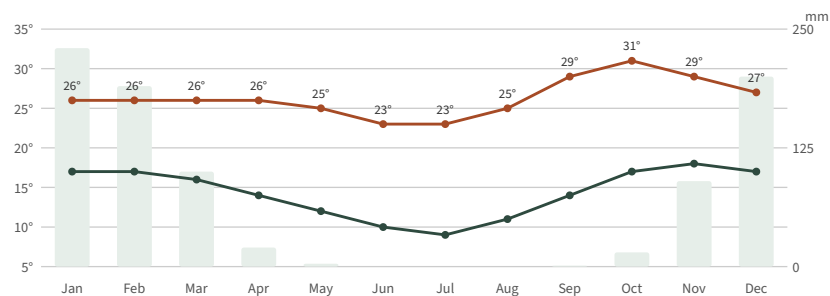
When to go to Zambia

Best time: **Jun–Oct**.



Average climate in Lusaka

— High °C — Low °C — Rain (mm)



Festivals & events

Feb	Ncwala The Ngoni first-fruits ceremony near Chipata in late February, when warriors in leopard skins dance and the paramount chief tastes the new harvest.
Mar–Apr	Kuomboka The Lozi king's royal barge, the Nalikwanda, is paddled from Lealui to higher ground at Limulunga as the Zambezi floods; held only when water levels allow.
Aug	Kulamba The Chewa people's annual thanksgiving ceremony at Mkaika near Katete in August, with Nyau masked dancers performing before the paramount chief, Kalonga Gawa Undi.

How much does Zambia cost?

SHOESTRING £45 per person / day ≈ ZMW 1,214 hostels, street food, buses	MID-RANGE £140 per person / day ≈ ZMW 3,776 3-star hotels, restaurants, some taxis	COMFORTABLE £400 per person / day ≈ ZMW 10,788 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

Nshima with kapenta Stiff white maize porridge rolled into balls by hand and dipped in relishes such as kapenta, tiny dried lake fish fried with tomato and onion.	Ifisashi Leafy greens such as pumpkin or sweet-potato leaves cooked in a creamy groundnut sauce, a favourite side to nshima across the country.	Chikanda Nicknamed 'African polony', a savoury cake of ground wild-orchid tubers, peanuts and chilli, sliced cold as a snack — a Bemba speciality.
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Getting around

Proflight Zambia connects Lusaka with Mfuwe, Livingstone and airstrips near the Lower Zambezi, and safari camps arrange the final transfers by road, boat or light aircraft. Intercity buses link Lusaka with Livingstone, Chipata and the Copperbelt; choose established companies. Self-drive 4x4 hire suits experienced drivers in the dry season, and the TAZARA railway runs a slow, weekly and often-interrupted service from Kapiri Mposhi to Dar es Salaam.

Practical information

PLUGS & VOLTAGE  C D G 230V — UK plugs fit	EMERGENCY NUMBERS Police: 991 Ambulance: 992 Fire: 993 Source: FCDO “Getting help”
DIALLING CODE +260	TIME ZONE UTC+2 (standard time)

TAP WATER

Not safe — drink bottled or treated water

DRIVING

On the left

TIPPING

Around 10% in restaurants. Safari camps usually have a communal staff tip box, with guides and trackers tipped separately, often in US dollars.

ETIQUETTE

Greet people properly before asking anything, receive items with both hands or your right hand, and ask before taking photos; never photograph bridges, airports, police or military sites.

MAIN AIRPORTS

Kenneth Kaunda International Airport (LUN), Lusaka; Harry Mwanga Nkumbula International Airport (LVI), Livingstone

Visas & entry for Zambia

Shown for a British passport.

No visa needed

British passport holders do not need a visa to enter Zambia. You must be able to show: valid return or onward tickets; enough money for your stay.

Tourists may remain in Zambia for a total of 90 days in any 12 month period. For business visitors the maximum stay in Zambia over a 12 month period is 30 days.

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

SOMETIMES ADVISED — DEPENDS ON YOUR TRIP, ACTIVITIES AND HEALTH

Dengue

Hepatitis B

Measles

Polio

Rabies

Tuberculosis

Yellow fever

YELLOW FEVER CERTIFICATE

No yellow fever certificate is required to enter.

MALARIA

High risk of malaria

- There is a high risk of malaria in Zambia: 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 Zambia

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

Sat 24 Oct 2026	Independence Day
Fri 25 Dec 2026	Christmas Day
Tue 29 Dec 2026	National Day of Prayer and Christian Heritage
Fri 1 Jan 2027	New Year's Day
Mon 8 Mar 2027	International Women's Day
Fri 12 Mar 2027	Youth Day
Fri 26 Mar 2027	Good Friday
Sat 27 Mar 2027	Holy Saturday
Sun 28 Mar 2027	Easter Sunday
Mon 29 Mar 2027	Easter Monday
Wed 28 Apr 2027	Kenneth Kaunda Day
Sat 1 May 2027	Labour Day
Tue 25 May 2027	Africa Freedom Day
Mon 5 Jul 2027	Heroes' Day
Tue 6 Jul 2027	Unity Day
Mon 2 Aug 2027	Farmers' Day

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

Useful phrases in Nyanja

ENGLISH	NYANJA	SAY IT
Hello	Moni	<i>MOH-nee</i>
Thank you	Zikomo	<i>zee-KOH-moh</i>
Please	Chonde	<i>CHON-deh</i>
Excuse me	Pepani	<i>peh-PAH-nee</i>
How much is this?	Ndi zingati?	<i>ndee zin-GAH-tee</i>

Know before you go

Victoria Falls is at its fullest from about March to May, when spray can hide the view; by October and November the Zambian side may be largely dry, though Devil's Pool opens at low water.

Many bush camps close during the rains, roughly November to April, and the best ones fill up for July to October a year ahead, so book early.

Zambia is a malaria area year-round; get advice on antimalarials before you travel, and use repellent and long sleeves at dusk, especially near rivers.

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.