

## What to do bring?

### CHECKLIST:

- Bring dollars (big notes (10+), printed after 2009 and in good order). Most lodges and tour operators will accept dollars) if you have no kwachas. The dollar notes have from 2009 or later and should look nice.
- Bring the exact amount of dollars for your visa (\$75 per person). Do not buy your visa at the embassy in Europe or the USA, because it is much more expensive and it is easy to buy it on arrival.
- Get vaccinations: yellow fever, hepatitis A and check your tetanus. Rabies only if you think you might be working with monkeys or are really scared to get bitten by street dogs (which is unlikely). Bring the yellow book, as you might need to show it at the airport – they will check for your yellow fever stamp.
- Your special medication (do not check it in and ask your doctor for a letter explaining about your medication);
- Get malaria tablets, either Lariam, Malerone or Doxycycline. Malerone is expensive; Doxycycline ('doxy') can also be bought here in Malawi. Some people take Lariam, which works well and is less expensive than Malerone, but you cannot take it if there are any psychological illnesses in your family or if you have a history of depression or psychosis yourself.
- You can bring some mosquito repellent with at least 40% deet. You can also buy good spray here (Peaceful Sleep) for 3,000 MWK (less than €5). You can bring your own mosquito net, but most lodges will have nets. All the places we stayed have nets! But some have holes, even at Pakachere sometimes because it happens that they get ripped within a day (some nets have to be replaced every week).
- If you want to travel low budget, bring a tent. Accommodation is quite pricy in Malawi but camping is cheap.
- The best travel book is the Bradt guide; Lonely Planet doesn't have much on Malawi, but on the internet you can buy the Malawi chapters in PDF of the Malawi, Zambia & Mozambique book.
- Bring an extra (old) phone for your local SIM card so you can easily call to make reservations or call a doctor in case of an emergency. Take your smart phone as well; 4G is quite cheap, most lodges have (paid) wifi, and WhatsApp is the most used means of communication.
- Get a converter plug. Malawi has 220-240V (like in Europe) and three square pins plugs like in the UK.
- A (head) torch, solar charger (or all-in-one, like the Waka Waka), power bank. Definitely a power bank (or two..) because power is unreliable and some places don't have electricity at all.
- Some batteries for your (head) torch and camera.
- For women, take at least 1 skirt or pair of trousers the cover your knees if you intend to visit rural areas. You can also buy a chitenje here to cover your knees if and when needed.
- Sun lotion is expensive in Malawi! Mosquito repellent is cheap.
- You can drive in Malawi with a European license, so no need to buy an international driving license.
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- A copy of your passport; also recommended to take a photo of the picture page and of your visa.
- If you like hiking, good walking shoes. If you like snorkeling, swimming gear and snorkel (even though you can borrow or rent them at most places on the lake). If you want to go on safari, a good camera and maybe binoculars.
- Warm clothes for the evenings. Especially when you come between May & August and stay in places like Zomba and Mzuzu – you need socks and shoes after dark as it can get chilly. During the day it will be sunny, nice and warm; at night it can be <10 degrees Celsius.
- Medication is available all over the country. It is good idea to bring your own thermometer. You can buy Ibuprofen and Paracetamol, but also anti-biotics, malaria medication and antidiarrheal at pharmacies in bigger towns. There are many safe clinics in the country where you can get a quick test if you think you have malaria and medication is easily available. If you want to bring a first aid kit, it is good to bring ORS (oral rehydration salts), antihistamines if you suffer from allergies, plasters, iodine (we love the plaster spray that disinfects the wound and puts a protective layer over it to stop dirt from getting in), and a thermometer.
- Food: Basically, you can buy almost everything here, but Western food, electronics and other mod cons are expensive and the quality is often bad. Don't worry if you forget tooth paste or a tooth brush, insect repellent or a mosquito net; you can get it all here. From biscuits and crisps to marmite and peanut butter, tea and milk (powder) can be bought in local shops. Cornflakes and granola bars are for sale in the big supermarkets in the cities, and even soy milk is available in some supermarkets (only in Lilongwe, Blantyre and Mzuzu; sometimes in Zomba). Soy pieces can be bought everywhere. Health food can be found in Lilongwe and Blantyre, but is very expensive. Zomba has a lot of fruit on the mountain and veg on the market. We even have our own superfoods like Moringa grown locally. Good (tasty matured) cheese is hard to get here and chocolate is available but very sweet. Expats are always happy with some good mature cheddar or Dutch 'belegen' cheese!

If you want to give something away for charity like hardcover notebooks (for school children), pens or balls, we actually recommend **not** to bring it from your home country; you can buy it here and you will stimulate the local economy by purchasing your goods here! If you want to bring clothes, toys or other things you want to donate, please ask at the lodge what is the best way is to distribute the donations. Giving away things randomly is not stimulated, because it creates a society where people expect handouts and can create jealousy. We kindly request to think before you give gifts to local people and want to ask you to donate your things to a registered charity or someone who can help distributing your donations in a fair way to people who need it the most. Most lodges work with community projects and have good local knowledge to assure your donations find a good home.

More information about travelling to Malawi can be on our website in Pakachere's subjective tourist guide.