



## TIPS FOR TT&F VOLUNTEERS

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I put together some basic information and common requirements for visiting Zambia. These items are frequently asked so they may help.

### Vaccinations

- Need: Typhoid, Hep A, Hep B, Dip/Tet booster (recommended for all international travelers.
- Malaria: Due to Lusaka's elevation, the *Anopheles* mosquito doesn't survive well here and thus malaria isn't found much in the Lusaka area. Having had malaria twice while on oral prophylactics during two other visits to Africa, I wouldn't spend the money on expensive meds for your stay in Lusaka. I'm not taking malaria meds for my stay with TTAF. Malaria meds don't protect you from infection. They just reduce or prevent the severest of the symptoms. I would rather know that I have malaria, instead of feeling a little ill. And you will know when you have it. Symptoms: high fevers with uncontrollable shaking and shivering, feeling cold, and in some people, severe headache, sore muscles, achy joints, overall weakness and lethargy, etc. If you plan on traveling outside of Lusaka, just be smart: wear long-sleeved clothes at night, use insect repellent, and sleep under a mosquito net. Also take some malaria pills while outside of Lusaka. You can start your malaria meds from here, before traveling around, and they are much cheaper here than in the States. All of this depends on your comfort level and if you feel like spending money on meds. Note: Most people take nothing in Lusaka and only take protection medicine when traveling outside of Lusaka. Many people take nothing at all, at any time, and are just careful about mosquito exposure.
- If you've traveled abroad before, send Dr. Tim an electronic copy of your WHO card (vaccine card) and he can tell you if all of your immunizations/vaccinations are up to date.

## Currency

- 1 USD = 5000 Zambian Kwacha depending on the economy and exchange rates and can vary widely. In last 6 months has gone from 3500 to 5000.
- Bring \$100's and \$50's for currency exchange. \$20's, \$10's, \$5's, and \$1's get a lower exchange rate. They want large bills. (Sorry Euro friends, don't know about the Pound and the Euro)
- Smaller \$ bills are nice for visa charges and you probably won't get change when getting your visa. Small bills are also good for traveling both in and out of the country especially at small border crossings into Malawi, Botswana, Mozambique, etc. It's doubtful that you will get change. You can also pay in Kwacha.
- Touristy places usually accept USD and it may be more advantageous to pay that way. For example, one night's accommodation may be 17 USD or 100,000 Kwacha. The current exchange rate is about 5000 so it would be cheaper to pay in USD.
- Get an idea of what the Kwacha is doing before coming – going up or down.
- Exchange just a few hundred when you arrive – enough to settle in. You may get a better rate in a couple of weeks. Currency is always a gamble.
- Look around for places off of the main drags in Lusaka that give a slightly better rate. This can add up. For example:  
500 @ 4850 = 2,425,000  
@ 5000 = 2,500,000  
75,000 – That's a good dinner with drinks.
- A good Bureau De Change is near the clinic and gives a slightly better rate; ask Phridae about it.
- I always travel with USD, but you can get cash at ATMs with a credit card. However, they charge you on both sides. Be sure to tell your credit card company that you will be in Zambia and not to block international usage.
- Traveler's checks are safe, but they charge you on both sides as well. It all depends on your comfort level.

## Visas

- 3 main locations: Lusaka Intl Airport, Immigration Headquarters (near the Intercontinental Hotel), Immigration Office (near Dr. Tim's clinic on Cairo Road).
- You can get your visa at the airport when you arrive (currently 135 USD – have correct bills)
- This is a **TOURIST VISA** and you can stay for 3 months, but you have to get a new stamp every month. There is not a charge for this.
- On the day your stamp expires you have to report to an Immigration office to get another stamp, which will last another month.

- For example: arrive Jan. 1 (tourist visa at airport – 135 USD)  
Feb. 1 (stamp at Immigration – free)  
Mar. 1 (stamp at Immigration – free)  
Apr. 1 (have to be out of the country, or pay to extend)
- If your stamp expires on a weekend or a holiday just go in the next working day.
- This is a pain in the rear and keeps you on a leash so plan your travels accordingly. Also, there are Immigration offices in every BOMA (BOMA = Provincial or District capitals within Zambia) so you can visit one of these to get your stamp if you are traveling.

### Extended Stay Volunteers

- ***If you plan on staying longer than 3 months*** you will have to convert your TOURIST VISA to a Visitor's Visa (or Temporary Permit.)
- One week after you get your third and final Immigration stamp on your tourist visa (eg. March 8<sup>th</sup> using the above example) you have to go to Immigration HQ (near the InterCon Hotel) to start the Visitors Permit process.
- When you are getting your final stamp be sure to ask about the process, exactly how it works, and how much it will cost.

I wasn't told about this so I went to the Immigration office near Tim's clinic on my last day and they started the process begrudgingly. It cost 2 million K (about 500 USD). They charged me another 100,000 K for paying in cash. Seems backwards, but apparently you have to pay with a cheque. Perhaps you can give money to TTAF and they can give you a cheque. You can also get a cheque at a bank, but they will charge you for this service. All of this smelled a little bad, but I was an illegal alien at this point so I coughed up the cash.

With this one time payment I was able to stay for another 3 months without returning for additional stamps and payments.

No one has had this process work the same yet. An extended stay volunteer before me got a Business Permit (stamped "by accident" into his passport on entry at the airport) and was charged monthly for staying and it ended up costing 4 million. I feel that I got a fair deal.

- For Visitors Visa, which you will apply for after your Tourist visa runs out, you will need:
  - o 2 passport sized photos
  - o Original passport
  - o Photocopy of passport
  - o Photocopy of the Immigration stamps in passport
  - o Photocopy of Dr. Tim's passport and work permit
  - o A simple letter stating that you are visiting Dr. Tim
  - o 2 million K in check or 2.1 cash

- To renew at the end of 6 months to stay for another 3 months it will cost about 2.5 million (or about \$500)

### Side Notes

- Never tell Immigration that you are a Volunteer. You are here on Tourist Visa and are visiting Dr. Tim.
- A little bit of local language goes a long way. ChiNyanja and ChiBemba are the most widely used languages in Lusaka.
- The Lonely Planet guidebook for Zambia (about \$20 in the States) is a helpful reference even if you don't plan to travel within Zambia. There's good stuff about Lusaka attractions and there's local language in the back of it as well.
- Get out of Lusaka. Whatever you are interested in or came here to study, it is much different in the villages in the bush. Makes for an interesting contrast.
- You should always travel with photocopies of your passport and extra passport photos in case of theft or loss (or visa extensions).
- Have fun! Hope all of this helps. Cheers.