

MISSION TRIP GUIDE



KARIBU (WELCOME)!

We're honored that you're interested in serving at our children's home! Started in 2006, our mission is to rescue and give new life to abused and abandoned children in Kenya, and our vision is that all children in their care rise to their full, God-given potential.

This Mission Trip Guide will educate you on things to consider as part of serving on a mission trip to our children's home in Kenya. Topics that will be addressed are:

- Facts and Information about Kenya, *Rehema for Kids*, and *In Step Children's Home*
- Passport & Electronic Travel Authorisation (eTA)
- Room and Board Costs
- Immunizations
- Travel Insurance
- Airline Ticketing

The success of our ministry can be attributed to our volunteers' knowledge, passion, and commitment to our mission. You will be part of a team that values the individual strengths that each person contributes. The more you learn about us, and the Kenyan culture, the more effective you will be. If your questions are not answered after reading this guide, please feel free to contact Tori Costello, Operations Manager, at tcostello@rehemaforkids.org



IMPORTANT FACTS ABOUT KENYA

Kenya is one of the most varied lands on the planet both in terms of its geography and its ethnic population. The Republic of Kenya sits on the equator, which is bordered by the Indian Ocean, Tanzania, Ethiopia, South Sudan, and Somalia. In 2022, Kenya population was estimated to be 54.3 million, which ranked 27th in the world.

Despite the economy's steady growth, more than half of the country's population lives below the poverty line, with less than one US Dollar a day. The most vulnerable are the families and children living in the urban slums and in the arid lands of northern Kenya.

With more than 42% of the population below 15 years of age, Kenya faces a high dependency burden, which places pressing demands on social services including education and health care.

Our 20-acre campus is made up of *In Step Children's Home* and *In Step Children's Academy*. Our campus is situated outside of Kitale, Kenya. Kitale is an agricultural town in northern Rift Valley, situated between Mount Elgon and the Cherangani Hills, at an elevation of around 6,200' above sea level (this an important consideration for people who are sensitive to high altitude locations or have chronic lung conditions like asthma.) Kitale is the capital town of Trans-Nzoia County.

The predominant religion in Kenya is Christianity, claimed by about 80% of population. Other faiths practiced are Baha'i, Hinduism, Islam, and traditional African religions.

Life in Kenya runs at a much slower pace. Typically, being on time and on schedule are not nearly as important to the local Kenyans as it is to Americans. It is important to be flexible!

Staple foods in Kenya include ugali (ground maize), beans, rice, fresh greens, kale, and cabbage.

Kenya continues to be plagued by high infant mortality, low life expectancy, malnourishment, and HIV/AIDS.

OUR STATEMENT OF FAITH

- We believe there is one God eternally existent within the Holy Trinity through God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.
- We believe Jesus Christ is the only Son of God who came to earth in human form, through a virgin birth, to be a once and for all sacrifice and forgiveness for humankind's sins of the past, present, and future.
- We believe that Jesus Christ rose from the dead and is seated at the right hand of the Father, and that He will come again to judge the living and the dead.
- We believe that the Holy Spirit fills and empowers us with spiritual gifts to do the works that our Heavenly Father has laid out before us.
- We believe that we are saved only by grace through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.
- We believe the Holy Bible to be the inspired Word of God and the only infallible truth.

OUR CORE VALUES

- Christ-Centered
- Biblical Authority
- Educational Empowerment
- Holistic Healing
- Compassionate Service
- Community Impact

GETTING TO OUR CAMPUS

Getting from the United States to Kenya takes a very long time! As a result, by the time visitors arrive in Nairobi, they often long for a bed and a shower and choose to stay the night at a hotel on the airport property before their in-country travel. Kenyan roads are very busy and not paved. As a result, most visitors get to our campus with a 45-minute flight from Nairobi to Eldoret, the largest airport near our campus, followed by a 90-minute car ride. We are happy to help coordinate your in-country flights and accommodations. The average cost of staying at one of the airport hotels is about \$180/night and the in-country flights cost about \$175 for a round-trip.



VALID PASSPORT

A valid passport is required to make your arrangements.

To obtain your passport, you will need to gather several original documents. To learn more about obtaining a passport, visit <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/passports/need-passport.html>

(Don't forget you will also need passport pictures when applying. No glasses are allowed in these photos. Passport photos can be taken at places with photo services.)

If you are a US citizen, you need to ensure the expiration date is more than 6 months **after your departure from Kenya and arrival in the US.**

KENYAN TOURIST ENTRY

Kenya recently updated their tourist entry process. Valid five-year re-entry passes for Kenya are still being accepted. For other visitors, Kenya now offers the Electronic Travel Authorisation (eTA). Obtaining an eTA requires logistical details and supporting documentation from our children's home, which our Operations Manager at *Rehema for Kids* will help you with. An eTA costs approximately \$35. For planning purposes, we recommend filling out this application about 1 month ahead of time but have found that most applications are approved in 2-3 business days.

ROOM AND BOARD

We ask for reimbursement for ground transportation to and from the airport and a donation of \$25 per day (not to exceed \$300/month) for accommodations while at *In Step Children's Home*. **Before traveling, you will receive an invoice from Rehema for Kids. Please send checks to our mailing address 1360 N Louisiana St #A-130, Kennewick, WA 99336**

Throughout your trip, you will be provided with the opportunity to shop for food. From the airport, many visitors stop at a larger grocery store in Eldoret before coming to campus. The reason many visitors prefer to stop here initially is because this grocery store has more of a variety of items to shop (e.g., grooming products, condiments, and spices). However, the grocery store in Kitale (near our campus) has basic daily staples (e.g. milk/creamer, coffee, bread, peanut butter, ground hamburger).

Our region grows lots of fruit but fewer vegetables. Depending on your preferences, we recommend you pack snacks (e.g., granola/protein bars, nut mixes, etc.) if you eat between meals.

As you plan your meals, it's important to know that **our campus requires cooking on a gas cooktop, and the refrigerator available to you is "apartment-sized."** Food in Kenya is very fresh, with little preservatives, and spoils much quicker than you might be used to. Depending on how big your group is, you may have to shop several times throughout your stay due to the refrigerator size. Vice versa, if you're in a smaller group, due to the lack of preservatives coupled with the humidity, the food may go bad before you are able to eat it. We recommend shopping for about 2-3 days of food at a time.

You are welcome to join the children at evening meals, but you must notify the kitchen of your plans that morning so the staff can plan accordingly. The children always love having "visitors" join them for meals! The children eat simple meals three times daily of maize and cooked green vegetables. However, their favorite meal is on Friday evening, when they are served sausages for dinner.

TRAVEL SAFETY

We encourage all visitors to regularly check the US Embassy in Kenya's website before your trip for timely travel alerts.

IMMUNIZATIONS

For more information on which vaccines are required and recommended for a trip to Kenya, visit the CDC's website at <https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/traveler/none/kenya>. **There are some immunizations that are required to enter the country, and are not generally covered by insurance (e.g., Yellow Fever).** The costs of these vary depending on the pharmacy. **Plan to begin this process early as most pharmacies must order the vaccines and some vaccines require multiple doses.**

Often, general practitioner doctors are not familiar with travel requirements and will encourage you to check with your local county travel clinic. If you live in an area without a travel clinic, you can consult with a medical professional through national pharmacies that offer immunization consultation services like Walgreens, MinuteClinic, or Costco Travel.

PREVENTING MALARIA SYMPTOMS

Malaria is very common part of life in our region of Kenya. It is imperative that you discuss this risk with your doctor to evaluate the benefits and risks of taking an anti-malarial medication. Your doctor will explain to you that while anti-malarial drugs are very effective, they are not 100% effective in preventing malaria. Your doctor may also share with you that some scientific research shows that the malaria parasite can lay dormant in your body (usually in your liver) for an unknown amount of time. This means that even years down the line, you could come down with malaria. The research shows that this is not common, but we feel obligated to share this information with you so you may discuss with your doctor prior to visiting Kenya. For more information: <https://www.cdc.gov/malaria/prevention/index.html>

We strongly recommend you also pack an insect repellent and take all precautionary steps to keep mosquitoes from biting you (e.g. using insect repellent on your skin and clothes).

TRAVEL INSURANCE

At a minimum, individuals or groups going on a short-term mission trip must be covered by health insurance. However, we also encourage you to consider travel insurance as well.

Travel insurance helps protect you against travel risks such as lost or stolen luggage, last-minute cancellations (should you not be able to travel due to unexpected medical reasons) and most importantly, cover emergency flights in the event of an evacuation or medical issue.

There are many different insurance carriers available. We don't have an affiliation with any insurance carrier and encourage you to diligently check reviews with a consumer reporting agency or Better Business Bureau before purchasing.

DRESS CODE & WHAT TO PACK

Towels and linens are available for you to use. While many Kenyans do not have hot water in their homes, our visitors enjoy the option of a hot water conversion system in the guest quarters. It is important to please be mindful that water is limited on our campus and in our region.

All visitors are expected to dress modestly. This includes no “spaghetti-strap” tank tops or tank tops that show undergarments, no revealing or see-through clothing. Skirts and/or shorts should come to at least the kneecap. Leggings and athletic pants are acceptable if a longer shirt is worn.

As you plan your trip, it’s important to know that we have employees who do laundry but all laundry is washed by hand and it is not culturally appropriate to expect someone outside of your family to wash your undergarments. We encourage you to pack enough underwear and/or plan to wash these yourself. We also ask you to not bring delicate or specialty wash clothing as handwashing can be tough on delicates.

The dirt on our campus is claylike and red. Avoid bringing any footwear that cannot be washed off easily. Most often, visitors find sneakers, Croc-style mules and flip flops are easiest to wash. Wellies-style rainboots are also suggested if your visit coincides with the wet season. We encourage visitors to pack shoes for both indoor and outdoor use.

Shampoo & conditioner are available for purchase in nearby stores. However, other haircare products (e.g. hairspray, pomade, gel, mouse, etc.) are not often available for purchase at nearby stores. Other toiletries (e.g. soap, toothpaste, shaving supplies) are available for purchase at nearby stores.

Kenya has a strict ban on ALL plastic bags, including Ziploc storage bags. The only exception is if something is already prepackaged from sale. If you like to travel with Ziploc-style bags, we recommend purchasing reusable bags (these are becoming much more common within the US, and you can purchase them on Amazon or from retail stores like Target or Wal-Mart).

Our campus gets very dark at night, so we recommend packing a flashlight and/or headlamp. Our campus often has travel adapters available and can accommodate powering simple electronics such as phones and tablets. However, even with a converter, many personal appliances, like hair dryers or straightening irons, are incompatible and/or risk becoming ruined during a power surge.

If you wish to bring a laptop on your trip, check with your airline to see if they allow laptops as carry-ons. If an airline does not allow laptops as a carry-on and requires it to be placed in checked luggage, we strongly recommend you reconsider bringing a laptop. Your bag will be checked by many companies and security organizations as you travel. **We also strongly recommend you not bring any jewelry or other valuables.**

If you would like to plan a special activity (e.g. Vacation Bible Study, soccer tournament) or bring small items (e.g. stickers, candy, etc.) for the kids and staff, we ask you coordinate this with our Directors, Jeff & Carla Picicci, so that staff are available and no children feel left out.



BUILDING HEALTHY LONG-TERM RELATIONSHIPS

Many visitors form meaningful connections with our children, especially our older students in high school, college, and vocational programs. It is natural to want to stay in touch after returning home through email, social media, WhatsApp, or other forms of communication.

We welcome healthy, encouraging relationships that continue to support our children emotionally and spiritually. However, we ask all visitors to maintain appropriate boundaries and remember that they are representing Christ and our ministry.

Please keep the following guidelines in mind:

- Never lend, give, or send money directly to a child or employee.
- Never agree to receive money on behalf of a child or employee, hold funds for them, or act as an intermediary for financial transactions.
- If a child or staff member shares a financial need, please encourage them to discuss it with Baba Jeff and Mama Carla rather than attempting to meet the need personally
- Keep all communication appropriate, encouraging, and respectful. Communication should never become secretive, exclusive, or inappropriate in nature.
- While visiting our campus, do not make promises about a child's future opportunities. This includes promises related to education, employment, scholarships, athletics, travel, immigration, or life in the United States.
- Please do not offer to connect children with coaches, universities, employers, sponsors, immigration resources, or others who may be perceived as providing a pathway to living or studying in another country.
- Even well-intentioned comments can create unrealistic expectations and disappointment for children whose futures are still uncertain.

We are grateful for the relationships that develop between visitors and our children. By maintaining healthy boundaries and realistic expectations, you help protect both the children and the integrity of our ministry.

MISSION TRIP GUIDE AFFIRMATION

I understand that participation in a mission trip is contingent upon my agreement to read, understand, and abide by the policies and expectations outlined in this document.

Print Name: _____ Signature: _____

Date: _____

(Please return this to Operations Manager Tori Costello tcostello@rehemaforkids.org)