Travel Basics: Africa
Agenda

- Basics about region
- Before you go
- Trip planning
- While you’re abroad
- Q & A
Before You Go: Passport and Visas

- **Passport/Visas:**
  - Apply at least 6-8 weeks in advance
  - Visa Services
    - Travisa, A Briggs
  - Some countries require a visa before leaving the US or entering the country, while others offer visa-on-arrival
  - Check requirements with US State Department: [https://travel.state.gov](https://travel.state.gov)
  - Make multiple copies of your passport to take with you and leave a copy with family
Before You Go: Recommended

● UM Travel Registry
  ○ Register your travel with the U-M Travel Registry (http://global.umich.edu/going-abroad/planning/registry/) so the University knows where you are in the case of an emergency (required for University-related travel)

● Smart Traveler Enrollment Program
  ○ Register with the U.S. Department of State for important updates https://step.state.gov/step/
Before You Go: Finances

- Make sure your bank card can be used overseas
- Call your bank to notify them of your trip
- Visa and Mastercard are accepted at most ATMs
- Be aware of ATM and foreign exchange fees
- Africa is almost exclusively cash-based outside of large cities
Phones & Communication

- **Cell phones**
  - Make sure your phone is unlocked and can be used internationally
  - SIM cards are cheap
  - Cheap phones can also be bought in-country

- **International Calling / Messaging Applications**
  - WhatsApp, Line, Groupme, Viber, Skype, Wechat, Kakaotalk

- **Accessing WiFi**
  - Internet cafes, coffee shops, hostels, hotels etc.
**Travel Health**

- **UHS Travel Health Clinic**
  - Get immunizations necessary for travel
  - Make an appointment ASAP since they are very busy
  - Immunizations on arrival

- **Health Insurance**
  - UM Travel Abroad Health Insurance: [http://uhsumich.edu/tai](http://uhsumich.edu/tai)
  - $1.10/day available for any person affiliated with U of M even if you are just traveling

- **Prescription Meds**
  - Do you have enough to last?
  - If you have a medical condition, be sure to talk to your doctor about handling situations abroad
  - Carry in carry-on and bring prescription documentation
Travel Health Cont.

- **Country-specific health & safety advice**
  - [https://travel.state.gov](https://travel.state.gov)

- **Pack a simple first-aid kit**
  - Band-aids, gauze pads, medical/cloth tape
  - Neosporin, antiseptic wipes
  - Burn ointment
  - Medication - Imodium, Pepto-Bismol tablets, Tylenol/Advil, etc.
  - Rehydration salts

- **Condoms, birth control**

- **Contact solution**

- **Iodine tablets**

- **Malaria medication**
Personal Safety

- Petty theft (pickpocketing, bag-snatching, etc.)
- Money belts - pros and cons
- Illegal/private cabs
- Motorbike transportation
- Drugs and alcohol
- Scams
- Harassment
- Be especially careful at ATMs, bus stations, known tourist spots (or, crowded areas in general!)
Feminine Hygiene

- Pads are widely available
- Tampons can be difficult to find, especially those with applicators
- Menstrual cup
- Birth control and Plan B availability depends on each country
LGBTQ+

- Check with the U-M Spectrum Center
- Views and practices differ in each country
  - Be culturally aware
  - Be mindful of all public displays of affection regardless of sexual orientation
- African countries tend to have more conservative views
  - It may be a risk to personal safety to disclose your sexuality if you are not heterosexual
Trip Planning
Packing

- Depending on your trip length…
  - Suitcase vs. Hiking backpack
- Pack light
  - Quick-dry towel
  - Most toiletries can be purchased when you’re there
- Plug adaptors
- Be careful about shavers, hair straighteners, and hair dryers since the voltage is different
- Deodorant - it can be hard to find
- Sunscreen
- First-aid kit, medication, prescriptions
- Earplugs
- Water filter
Packing

- **Clothing**
  - Pack for the climate/weather
  - Sometimes easier and cheaper to buy clothes at the country you will be staying in for weather appropriate fabrics and culturally polite clothing
  - Adhere to customs of countries you’re visiting

- **Comfortable shoes**
  - Rubber flip flops/sandals for hostels, bathrooms
  - Hiking boots or hiking sandals for rainy season

- **1-2 dressy outfits**

- **Limited shoe and clothing sizes in-country**

- **Electronics, extra memory cards**

- **Copies of important documents**
Airfare

- **STA Travel and Student Universe**
  - Offer student and youth (<26 years old) discounts

- **Flight aggregators**
  - Skyscanner, Momondo, and Kayak

- **Official airline websites sometimes have deals that aren’t available on other websites**
When You’re There
**Africa is a huge continent with thousands of unique cultures...these norms apply to some cultures, but not all**

- Dress/act conservatively
- Collectivist culture over individualism
- Gender roles may be more pronounced
- Be aware of religious observances/holidays
- May be more blunt about topics we may consider personal: physical appearance, relationship status, income, etc.
- Concept of time
Finances Abroad

- Cash; credit/debit cards
- Currency exchange
- Call your bank and credit card company to advise them of your travel plans!
- Make sure the ATM can take your card
- Budgeting
Accommodation

- Hostels: Hostelworld, Hostels.com
  - Great place to meet others if you're traveling solo
- Local hotels - quality may vary
- Plan ahead for holidays and festivals
- AirBnB and Couchsurfing are possible in some countries
Transportation

- Many modes of transport available, flying is the easiest but most expensive
  - Flying may also be the safest form of traveling over some borders
- Buses and mini-vans are popular for overland and cross-border travel
  - Be aware of possible delays/road closures during rainy season
Health Abroad

- Health-care quality differs in countries and locations
- Clinics in large cities are usually better than those in rural areas
- Be mindful of food, since sanitation differs (especially street food)
- Don’t drink or brush your teeth with the tap water
  - ONLY use bottled water, boiled water, or chlorinated water
- Post-Exposure Prophylaxis for potential HIV exposure may be available
- Be sure to take malaria medicine consistently (where advised)
- Use mosquito nets when available
- Bed bugs, fleas, etc., are common
Food

- Many different parts of the animal are eaten
- Cheese and other dairy products may be difficult to find or expensive
- Make sure raw fruits and vegetables are washed and handled properly (using chlorinated or filtered water)
- Sanitation differs
- Be especially careful with street food
Water and Power Outages

- Be aware that these can happen at anytime, may be frequent depending on country and city
- Unplug electronics during storms
- Access to running water will vary depending on location (if you’re in an urban area, you’d likely have access to running water but not necessarily hot)
The Bathroom Situation

- ALWAYS bring tissues or toilet paper with you
- Toilets may range from a shallow hole in the ground to a flush toilet
Shopping

- Bargaining/haggling is typical and usually expected in open-air markets
- Large supermarkets or stores selling foreign products typically only in large cities
Questions?