

Safari Packing Tips: What I Learned From My Recent Trip

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So you are going on Safari and then it hits you.. what should I pack?!! Here is what I learned from my recent trip to Africa.

Outside of international flights, most domestic travel is either by a safari truck or on small charter planes often called “bush planes”. These are Cessna-type aircrafts that hold 6-12 passengers that look something like this:



Most of these planes allow 15kg (33lb) per person total -both check-in plus carry on.

In addition, luggage must be soft sided duffel bags only. We used the [Samsonite Andante 2 Wheeled Duffel Bag 28](#)” and it was perfect.

The good news: all camps have laundry services and most are included. Since all safaris start and end in a major city, it is possible to leave a bag behind and pick it up on your way out.

For two weeks of safari and one week of gorilla trekking, I packed:

- Three pants (on rotation)
- Four short sleeve t-shirts
- A couple of tanks
- Two long sleeve sweat-friendly shirts, for gorilla trekking
- A neutral bush-toned jacket that matched everything I brought
- A few scarves to tie it altogether (and for dust, mosquitos or tying up hair)
- A safari hat and a baseball cap
- Long socks to keep those pesky bugs from biting me and
- Jogger type pajamas for the same reason



A typical safari day starts before sunrise, back to camp for lunch and siesta, then out again for a late afternoon game drive and back to camp for dinner and retiring for the night. It is definitely an early to bed, early to rise experience. I wore shorts in the middle of the day, and changed before heading out for the afternoon. The same outfit carried into the afternoon game drive and dinner. I did bring a couple of dresses which never left my bag.



For shoes, I brought a pair of [Cole Haan Combat Boots](#) – (waterproof -great for river crossings on gorilla treks, great outsole traction).



I also brought [Hoka Transport Gore-Tex Waterproof Running Shoes](#), in Dune/Dune/Eggnog (light, waterproof and easy to slip off when climbing on seats to peek my head out of the open roof of the converted Safari trucks to view the animals).

The third and last pair of shoes I brought were my [Lululemon restfeel slides](#). Perfect for camp, pool or downtime.

Check the weather. This Florida girl was shocked by mornings in the 50s in the Serengeti and was so happy I packed a nice [Patagonia sweater fleece jacket](#) which I wore nearly every day. I was also glad I had a warm hat and wished I would have packed gloves. Next time.

Half of our time in Africa was spent traveling so comfortable layered outfits were key -those little planes and mid-day road transfers heat up fast.

Some other things I was so happy I brought with me were:

- Vaseline, a lifesaver in the dry air.
- An inflatable lumbar support pillow to sit on (saved my husband's back on those rough roads). I brought this [one](#).
- Sunscreen. Sunscreen. Sunscreen.
- Bug spray (ask camp staff before using -it can attract the wrong insects!)
- A handful of my favorite bars to eat on the go and my own coffee sweetener (Stevia was nowhere to be found).
- An extra large Ziploc bag for dirty boots.
- A makeup mirror with lights.

A note about hair, especially hair dryers. A lot of camps are on solar power and generators which means you often won't be able to use a hair dryer. Some camps provide battery powered hair dryer but frankly it barely worked. Plan ahead and you'll be fine. Ponytails were essential to keep hair out of the way, especially while shooting photographs with my SLR camera.

Things I wish I had:

- A YETI cup. Because I like my drinks cold and nothing stayed cold on the safari truck. Even in the refrigerated cooler.

At the end of the day, packing for safari isn't about bringing the most—it's about bringing the right things. Think comfort, layers, and items that multitask, and remember that laundry is usually available. A few smart choices go a long way toward keeping you comfortable so you can focus on what you came for: the wildlife, the landscapes, and the once-in-a-lifetime experiences that make Africa unforgettable.

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