



Packing for Safari



Courtesy Beretta, Moleskin

Indagare founder Melissa Biggs Bradley weighs in on packing tips for going on safari and includes some of her own favorite products and items.

First, you should pack in a soft, weather-resistant duffle bag as you will most likely be taking charter flights, and there are strict luggage limits of no more than 33 pounds per passenger for checked pieces. Bags may need to be stuffed under seats or in small holds. (You will be allowed one carry-on; I suggest a backpack that fits your toiletries and camera equipment, which you should NEVER check.) As there is no reason to dress up (even for dinner) and laundry is done every day at camps, you only need pack comfortable clothes for the bush. Safari outfits and khaki colors may seem cliché but they are practical; they don't show dirt, don't stand out in the bush and keep you cool and protected from the sun.

Leave valuable jewelry at home. You can honestly stick to the following list and not need anything else.

Pants

3 pairs of light cotton **pants**. Pants should be comfortable, don't show dirt or wrinkle and have SPF or bug protection, but any khakis or cargo pants will also do. (note: do not wear camouflage print as they are only to be worn by the army in many African countries.) Some of these can zip off for shorts and the companies below also sell safari shorts. Note that skirts are not practical on safari, even in the evenings, because of bugs.

Ladies

- Columbia- [Women's Saturday Trail Stretch Convertible Pant](#)
- Orvis- [ExOfficio Nomad Roll-Up Women's Pants](#)
- Orvis- [Brushed Stretch-Cotton Chinos](#)
- Orvis- [Wrinkle-Free Chinos](#)
- Outdoor Research- Women's Treadway Convert Pants
- Holland and Holland- Ladies LW Safari Trouser

Men

- Orvis- [ExOfficio BugsAway Sandfly Pant](#)
- Outdoor Research- Men's Ferrosi Convertible Pants
- Beretta- [Sport Safari Pants](#)
- Holland and Holland- Mens LW Multipocket Safari Trouser
- Holland and Holland- Mens Gabardine Multipocket Trouser

Shirts

4 cotton **shirts** long sleeved and short. I prefer button down-style because they breathe and provide good sun cover and work day or night. Make sure shirts are comfortable and easy-wash and protect you from bugs. [ExOfficio](#) has a nice line of options that are treated with sun protection and bug repellent.

Ladies

- Orvis- [ExOfficio BugsAway Women's Breez'r Long-Sleeved Shirt](#)
- Orvis- [ExOfficio Women's Gill Long-Sleeved Shirt](#)
- Orvis- [ExOfficio Dryflylite Women's Long-Sleeved Shirt](#)
- Orvis- [ExOfficio BugsAway Lumen Hoody](#)
- Beretta- Women's Bamboo Long Sleeve T-Neck

Men

- Orvis- [ExOfficio BugsAway Baja Sur Long-Sleeved Shirt](#)
- Orvis- [ExOfficio Men's Reef Runner Lite Long-Sleeved Shirt](#)
- Orvis- [ExOfficio Air Strip Long-Sleeved Shirt](#)
- Orvis- [ExOfficio BugsAway Impervio Long-Sleeved Shirt](#)
- Beretta- [Insect-Repellent Kudu Camp Shirt](#)

Outerwear

A **Safari-style jacket** with lots of pockets or (in warmer months) a photographer's or fishing **vest** is great to have because you can keep lens caps, sunglasses, memory cards, gloves, bug spray, lip balm, sunscreen, wipes etc... on your person. Having a durable jacket that doesn't show dust, you can layer underneath is really useful.

Also, Depending on the season when you are traveling, you will have cold mornings and nights. Botswana and Tanzania in June through August, for instance, can be quite chilly so it is wise to bring layers of Capilene and **fleeces** that you can remove as the day warms up. Favorite brands include Patagonia, Columbia Sport, Outdoor Research and The North Face.

Ladies

- Holland and Holland- Lightweight Multipocket Safari Jacket
- Holland and Holland- Safari Shooting Vest
- Beretta- [Women's Safari Vest](#)
- Michael Kors- Shiny Cinch-Waist Anorak
- Rag & Bone- Marshall Jacket

Men

- Orvis- [Ranger Jacket](#)
- Orvis- [Heritage Field Coat](#)
- Beretta- [Sport Safari Vest](#)
- Holland and Holland- Mens Gabardine Classic Jacket
- Holland and Holland- Gabardine Safari Vest

Hat

Hat (wide-brimmed sun hat with a tie so it doesn't blow off on game drives or boat rides are best because they cover the neck and ears, which baseball caps don't.) In colder months, it is also advised to have a warm hat and gloves for the mornings and evenings.

Thin fleece ones from the North Face or Patagonia are ideal.

- Outdoor Research- Ghost Rain Hat
- Columbia- [Coolhead Booney Hat](#)
- ExOfficio- [BugsAway Canvas Brim Hat](#)

Other Clothing

- 4-5 pairs of **underwear** (In winter months long Capilene underwear is useful) Favorite brands include Patagonia and Columbia Sport.
- Comfortable, water-resistant **hiking shoes** are best. REI is a great source for a range of brands. **Sandals** (Tevas or flip flops for going to the pool or even wearing as slippers in your tent)
- 1 pair light cotton **shorts**
- 4-5 pairs of cotton **socks**
- 1 **work-out outfit** that can double as **pajamas**; yoga pants and long sleeved t-shirt
- 1 **fleece** (mornings and evenings can be chilly, especially in July and August)
- **Bathing suit** (if your lodges have pools or you are going to the coast)
- 1 **Sarong/kaftan** (for reason above only)

Luggage

Duffel: Luggage limits are very strict because many flight companies have both 14-seat Caravan Cessnas and in places like Botswana also 6-seat C206s with very small luggage compartments. They have to squeeze **soft-sided luggage** into the holds

- Eagle Creek- No Matter What Duffel (no longer sold through EagleCreek but available at third-part retailers). See more [Eagle Creek duffels here](#)
- L.L. Bean- Sunwashed Canvas Adventures Duffle, Medium
- Beretta- Waxwear Duffle Bag
- Orvis- [Gokey Heritage Duffle](#)
- Holland and Holland- Bolster Bag

Backpack (You'll want to have cameras, binoculars, tissues etc... with you on game drives, and on flights you will want to keep with you—NOT CHECK—valuables and toiletries)

Incidentals

- Journal

- Camera (definitely bring telephoto lens of at least 200 feet, plenty of extra batteries, memory cards, chargers etc...) Bring a camera for each person in the group, even a simple digital ones for kids, so they can “shoot” the animals too
- Medicines (see below)
- Sunscreen
- Toiletries
- Bug spray
- Binoculars
- Sunglasses
- Scarf and gloves
- Wool hat
- Cash
- Gifts (Pens, soccer balls or little notebooks make nice presents for children in villages if you will visit them.
- Africa-related books (An iPad is great for traveling because you can download a wide selection of books as well as favorite daily newspapers each day and it weighs virtually nothing). See our Library section for ideas.

Medicine Kit

See your doctor before you leave for advice on what to bring, but, in addition to regular prescriptions, mine recommends the following: Cipro (a strong but all-purpose antibiotic), Imodium, benadryl cream *and* pills, Neosporin, Band-Aids, aspirin, motrin, Pepto-Bismal (chewable for kids and pills for adults) and cold medicine. I found traveling baby wipes great to have as well as granola bars and fruit strips (from health food store) for when the kids got hungry on a long game drive or plane wait.

For Rwanda

Travelers to Rwanda should be prepared with clothing items to protect against the sometimes rough brush and fire ants.

- Garden gloves (for the nettles)
- Tight socks to go over pants (for the fire ants)

- Melissa Biggs Bradley on July 18, 2014

