



African Great Rift Valley Kit List

This document is a guide to the expedition kit you will need for your expedition based on what you will be doing in Tanzania and Malawi.

When packing you need to be thinking of the minimum amount you can take whilst remaining comfortable and safe; you want to aim for light, compact, durable, quick-drying and versatile equipment. While on the project there aren't many times where you'll need to carry all your luggage, you'll definitely appreciate a lighter bag in the airport and on transfers.

The list below is essential kit unless stated as optional. If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact your nearest Opwall office or email alex.tozer@opwall.com

Summary Checklist	Tick off once you have gone through each section of your kit list	Tick Box
Documentation	What documentation you are required to bring on site.	
Hand luggage	What to include in your hand luggage.	
Terrestrial Kit	What to bring for the terrestrial part of your expedition.	
Marine Kit	What to bring for the marine part of you expedition.	
Toiletries	Guide to the toiletries you will require.	
Clothing essentials	Clothing that you will require on site.	
Optional extras	Items you may want to consider bringing.	
Medical Kit	Essential medical kit for the expedition.	
Purchasing advice	Where you can buy expedition equipment.	
Resources	Suggested resources to learn more about the region before your expedition.	
Money	What money you need and the easiest way to bring it to site.	
Food	What food to expect on site.	

Documentation		Tick Box
Insurance documents	If you have your own policy separate to your Opwall and school insurance, so you have the details to hand if you need them.	
Photocopy of passport	Always useful when travelling, and make sure you keep a copy in a different place to your actual passport!	
Passport photo	2 x passport photo for diving PIC card and one incase you lose your passport.	
Visa	Even though you can get your visa on arrival, the process at the airport can be confusing and can take a long time, so we strongly recommend you get your visa in advance , especially if you are landing in Dar Es Salaam and flying to Mbeya on the same day.	
Under 16 documentation	If you are under 16 you will need a legally authorized letter from your parents giving you permission to travel. Please contact Operation Wallacea as soon as possible if this applies to you.	



Hand luggage	Unfortunately, with working in such remote locations often involving numerous flights and forms of transport, luggage can go missing. It is best to be prepared just in case, so here is what we recommend you pack in your hand luggage.	Tick box
Valuables	Including passport and money.	
Personal medicine	Anything you need to take, or might need to take. Keep these in their original packaging and labelled.	
Change of clothes	Including spare underwear.	
Head torch/head lamp	Essential for your expedition, so this is not something you want to lose.	
Toiletries	Tooth brush and wet wipes at the very least	
Sleeping bag/liner	If you have to borrow a sleeping bag its always nice to have your own liner to use.	
Walking boots/hiking shoes	Wear these on the plane, reduces space and makes sure you don't lose them.	
Coat/jacket	Wear this on the plane, it will keep you warm and saves space in your luggage. Also needed on the expedition.	

Terrestrial & General Kit	Remember you usually only have 20-25KG for international flights. Remember to check with the airline what your luggage allowance is	Tick box
Rucksack or Holdall	You don't need to carry your bag too far on the project, so a rucksack is not essential, though recommended	
Small day rucksack	A 10 to 30litre backpack for fieldwork—it's easiest to use this bag as your hand luggage	
Sleeping Bag	Ideally bring a 3 season sleeping bag—it can get cold at night.	
Water Bottle/Platypus	At least 2 litre capacity—preferably more. This can be in multiple containers.	
Small Towel	Travel towels are perfect as they're lightweight and quick drying. Alternatively a small/thin towel, or sarong. Don't bring a standard towel as they're bulky, heavy and take a long time to dry.	
Head Torch/Head Lamp	Petzl and LED Lenser are the best brands. A regular torch is OK but a head torch is much easier to use and generally more suitable for expeditions where you need your hands free.	
Wrist watch with alarm	Some sort of alarm is essential. A waterproof (up to 50m) watch works best as you can also use this while diving.	
Notebook and Pencil	For taking notes during lectures, or writing an expedition diary.	
Binoculars	Although not essential for any of the surveys, you will definitely regret not bringing a pair as they are invaluable for good bird and game viewing experiences. At least make sure you have a number of pairs amongst your school group. 8x40 is the minimum recommended.	



Marine site equipment: Below is a list of essential equipment required. With spending so much time in the water, you want to make sure that you have the correct equipment. Some of this can be hired on-site but in terms of comfort, temperature and time on-site some of you may wish to buy your own, **especially** a mask and a pair of fins (see Optional Extras section).

If you do wish to buy any of these we strongly suggest that you call the agents that we work with directly (see purchasing advice) as they will be able to provide you with both excellent advice as well as giving you information on their best deals!

Marine Specific Kit		Tick box
PADI crew Pack	To complete your PADI open water course you must arrive on site with this pack. Your pack must include a PADI Open water manual, RDP (Recreational Dive Planner), PIC card (Positive Identification Card) and logbook. Find more information at: http://opwall.com/get-involved/making-a-payment/padi-pack-and-pic-purchase/ . Qualified divers must bring proof of your qualifications, your completed log books and PADI forms. Non-PADI qualifications are accepted if equivalent to or more advanced than PADI open water.	
PADI forms	You must complete these online via the Opwall portal (http://portal.opwall.com) at least 3 months prior to travel. If you need a form signed by a doctor in order to dive then you must bring this with you.	
Wetsuit (3mm)	You'll need a full length 3mm or 5mm wetsuit. Typical water temperature at that time of year is about 24 degrees centigrade.	
Wetsuit Booties	Highly desirable. These can be used for shore surveys around Lake Kisiba and for wading into Lake Malawi from the shore at the dive site. The types of fins you hire at the dive site are designed to be worn with booties so we strongly recommend you bring some.	

Toiletries	A good tip to travelling light is to get into small groups to combine things like toiletries, foot powder and sun block as you don't all need to bring a bottle each!	Tick box
Toiletries	Tooth brush, tooth paste, hair and body wash.	
Insect repellent	As it's winter, the mosquito count is fairly low, but it is still recommended that you bring insect repellent and use it in the evenings. DEET is generally not recommended due to it's impact on the environment, but there are alternatives such as Ecoguard and Mosi-guard natural. See: www.alternativeinsectrepellent.co.uk/ .	
Suncream/Sunblock	SPF25 minimum, although it is winter the sun can still be very strong and you will potentially be outside in sunlight all day.	

Please bring 'green' or biodegradable toiletries to minimize the impact on the environment. Most biodegradable soaps are multi-use. Most shops now sell biodegradable/environmentally friendly toiletries, or alternatively there is lots of options online.



Clothing Essentials		Tick box
Lightweight long trousers (2 pairs)	Make sure they are loose and comfortable to walk in. We recommend long trousers instead of shorts for wearing in the field.	
Shorts (1-2 pairs)	It is a good idea to have something in neutral colours (beige, khaki etc) for the game reserve at the end of the trip.	
4-5 T-shirts/shirts	As above, something in neutral colours is useful for the game reserve.	
2 fleeces/hoodies/jumpers	Non-bulky if possible, but it's a good idea to bring a couple of different thicknesses in order to help with the change in temperatures.	
Coat/jacket	Doesn't have to be too thick but something to keep you warm in the evenings and mornings whilst in Kisiba will be useful.	
Walking boots	Comfortable, firm ankle support, good grip, quick drying. Make sure they are well worn in to prevent blisters.	
Sandals/Flipflops	Anything that is comfortable to wear that allows your feet to air, and be used on the beach at the marine site.	
Hat with brim	Something to keep the sun off your head, prevents dehydration and sunburn	
Woolen Hat	Something to keep your head warm in the cold mornings.	
Waterproof	A lightweight waterproof or poncho is helpful.	
Swim Suit/Board Shorts	For the beach and the water!	
Underwear, nightwear, socks.	Bring at least six pairs of underwear and walking socks, and something to sleep in.	
<p>It is a good idea to keep one set of clothing clean for your flights to and from country, this makes your travel and the people around you more comfortable.</p> <p>Temperatures at Kisiba, the terrestrial site, can regularly drop below 10 degrees at night so make sure you bring warm clothing. Remember you need to travel light so wear your hiking boots onto the aeroplane to keep the weight of your pack down, and then you can kick them off during the flight for comfort (as long as they don't smell!). Label your baggage, clothes and kit; there are many volunteers, and some may have the same or similar items to you.</p>		

Optional extras	Here are some items you may want to consider bringing .	Tick box
Camera	If you have one bring it—you will come back with some amazing pictures. Phone cameras are generally not recommended for game viewing in the last couple of days as you need something with a decent zoom.	
iPod/music player/cards/travel games/book	There will be some down time during the expedition you may want some form of entertainment.	
Plug adaptor	Plugs used in Tanzania and Malawi are the same type as those used in the UK—3 pin square.	
Spare Batteries	Good idea to bring spares for any electrical equipment such as your head torch.	
Sunglasses	Nothing expensive, but any pair with UV protection will be useful.	
Mask (with snorkel) and fins	Optional as you can get them through dive hire, but sometimes having your own mask means it will fit better. The same goes for fins.	



Medical Kit	Staff will be carrying medical kits and the medical provision on site is excellent. However, there are some items listed below you should carry yourself (as appropriate).	Tick box
Antihistamine Tablets	For allergic reactions and mosquito bites.	
Antihistamine Cream	For allergic reactions and mosquito bites.	
Paracetamol/Aspirin	For headaches.	
Ibuprofen	For headaches or inflammation.	
Rehydration Salts	At least 6 sachets.	
Antiseptic Wipes	To clean any open wounds, scratches or blisters.	
Plasters/Band-Aids	Assorted sizes, and include blister plasters	
Hand sanitiser	Soap will be provided in the bathrooms, but it's great to carry some of this around in case you need to clean your hands in the field.	
Sanitary Towels/Tampons	Travel can disrupt your cycle so don't assume you won't need them, and they are not available to purchase when on site.	
Sea sickness tablets, anti-nausea tablets or aquastraps/seabands	The road travel inbetween the sites can be fairly bumpy, so even if you don't normally get seasick it's a good idea to be prepared.	
Ear drops	If you're prone to swimmers ear.	
Anti-Malarials	Ensure to consult your doctor/nurse about your anti-malarial requirements. Both Tanzania and Malawi experience Malaria so it very important to take prophylaxis. Important — If you are diving you cannot take Larium.	
Prescription medicines	Bring any prescription medicines that are personal to advice, and bring more than you usually require just in case you lose some during travel.	

Purchasing advice	You may find that you have suitable gear already, so don't feel you have to buy everything new! Shop around as there are some really great deals out there and you may even be able to borrow from friends or relatives.	Tick box
Nomad Travel (UK)	20% off online and in store using code OPW1000	
Travel with Care (UK)	10% discount for Opwall volunteers 01980 626361	
Cotswold Outdoor (UK)	15% off online and in store using code AF-OPWAL-9P	
Mountain Warehouse (UK)	20% discount for Opwall volunteers if you show your Opwall support letter	
Watersports Warehouse (UK)	Excellent for dive gear with a 10% discount! www.watersportswarehouse.co.uk/shop/scuba-diving-equipment/operation-wallacea.html (Voucher ID: 42665 Password: OpWa10)	
<p>Most supermarkets now offer very inexpensive wetsuits, although these are not always great quality. Another good website if you want to invest in a more robust wetsuit is www.wetsuitoutlet.co.uk which offers free returns and we have also experienced excellent customer service with them.</p>		



Resources	If you want to learn more about the region you will be visiting these resources are a fantastic place to look.
ID guides	<p>You can find these with the rest of the training materials we have provided. These are very useful on site to help you with getting to know the animals. If you would like more detail, the following guide-books are highly recommended:</p> <p>Lake Malwi Cichlids from Tanzania—Andreas Spreinat</p> <p>Collins Traveller's Guide: Wildlife of Kenya, Tanzani and Uganda—David Hosking and Martin Withers</p> <p>The Cichlid Diversity of Lake Malawi/Nyasa/Niassa: Identification, Distribution and Taxonomy—Jos Snoeks</p>
Travel guide	Lonely Planet Travel Guide: Tanzania—Mary Fitzpatrick and Tim Bewer
Further information	<p>Barley, S. (2009) Kenya's lions could vanish within 10 years. New Scientist Online available at http://www.newscientist.com/article/dn17648-kenyas-lions-could-vanish-within-10-years.html</p> <p>Maslin, M (2013) How Climate Change and Plate Tectonics Shaped Human Evolution A new study links the emergence of new hominid species, expanding brain capacity and early human migration with the appearance of deep freshwater lakes. The Conversation on November 14, 2013 https://theconversation.com/how-a-changing-landscape-and-climate-shaped-early-humans-19862</p>

Money	<p>Spending money is an optional extra to cover personal on-site expenditure. In Tanzania you would need to have some Tanzanian shillings (although there are only a few small shops selling very basic snacks within walking distance of the camp, so spending opportunities are minimal), and in Malawi US dollars are widely accepted. At Nkhata Bay in Malawi there is a bar at the backpacker lodge.</p> <p>We would therefore advise getting some US dollars in advance of arriving, and then getting some Tanzanian shillings at the airport via an ATM or the Bureau de Change. You will not be able to withdraw money once you arrive at any of the project sites. We'd recommend budgeting the equivalent of between \$15 and \$60 per week, depending on how much you like snacks or souvenirs!</p>
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Vaccinations (including Yellow Fever)	<p>It is very important that you visit your doctor/nurse/travel clinic to ensure that you are up to date with the relevant vaccinations for Tanzania and Malawi. At present Yellow Fever is not generally recommended for Tanzania or Malawi (according to the World Health Organisation). However, many travelers have reported being asked to display a yellow fever certificate on arrival, especially if arriving after transferring in a country where yellow fever is present, such as Kenya. We therefore recommend getting the yellow fever vaccination if possible.</p>
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Food	<p>When on expedition 3 meals a day are provided, but please be aware that due to the remote location of the sites that food can be basic. Special dietary requirements are catered for as much as possible, but we would also suggest that if you are a vegan or particular about certain foods that you bring cereal bars/snacks/vitamins out to site. If there is anyone with food allergies you must let us know.</p>
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