



ZIMBABWE

Quick Facts

Population: 13 million

People: Shona (76%), Ndebele (18%), Batonka (2%), Shangaan (1%), Venda (1%), European, Asian

Language: English, Shona,

Religion: Christian, Mwari

Time: GMT/UTC +2

Electricity: 220V

Dialing Code: 263

Visas

Most visitors require a 3 month holiday or 30 day business visa which can be obtained on arrival. Please check with our sales representative or contact your local embassy or consulate for the most up-to-date visa requirements for your particular country.

Best time to go

The dry winter months (May to October) are the most comfortable for travelling, but you'll miss the green landscapes that characterise the hotter and wetter summer season (November to April). In winter, night-time temperatures can fall below freezing but the days are best for wildlife viewing because animals tend to concentrate close to water holes and are therefore easily observed. National parks are most crowded during South African school holidays, so to avoid the throngs, avoid mid-April to mid-May and mid-July to mid-September. There's a secondary rush around the Namibian school holidays in December and early January.

Money

Zimbabwe Dollar (Z\$) = 100 cents. Notes are in denominations of Z\$500, 100, 50, 20, 10, 5 and 2. Coins are in denominations of Z\$5, 2 and 1, and 50, 20, 10, 5 and 1 cents.

Major foreign currencies can be exchanged at banks and major hotels at the official exchange rate. American Express, Diners Club and Visa are widely accepted, whilst MasterCard has more limited use. Some ATMs accept credit cards.

Festival Calendar

On 18 April, **Independence Day** festivities are celebrated around the country, and in late May, **Africa Day** commemorates past independence struggles. On 11 and 12 August, the Zimbabwean military forces are feted and heroes of the independence movement are honoured. There's also the enormous **Zimbabwe Agricultural Society Show**, held at the Harare showgrounds around the end of August, and the **Houses of Stone Music Festival**, a celebration of traditional Zimbabwean music that takes place in Harare on a different date each year.

Food & Drink

Zimbabwe is a cosmopolitan society and enjoys both local and international cuisine. Eating out is popular and comparatively cheap. A traditional dish is sadza (a stiff maize meal) eaten with meat and/or gravy and a relish. Table service is the norm in restaurants. Beer is the most widely consumed alcoholic beverage. Imported wines, spirits and liqueurs are available in hotels. Traditional maize beer, whawha, is made in large quantities on special occasions.

Best Buys

Special purchases are copper, wooden and soapstone carvings, gameskin and leather products, pottery and basketwork.

Our Joining Point Cities

HARARE: Formerly Salisbury, the capital is Zimbabwe's commercial and industrial centre and also the usual starting point for any visit. It is a clean and sophisticated city, characterised by flowering trees, colourful parks and contemporary architecture. Local sightseeing includes the modern museum and art gallery, the Robert Mcllwaine Recreational Park, which has a lake and game reserve, the Lion & Cheetah Park, the Larvon Bird Gardens and the landscaped gardens of aloes and cycads at Ewanrigg Botanical Gardens. Because of its pleasant climate, Harare is known as the 'Sunshine City'.

VICTORIA FALLS: 120km (75 miles) from the Hwange National Park are the largest waterfalls in the world 2.5km (1.5 miles) wide, 550 million litres of water plunge every minute 100m (330ft) into a narrow chasm; the spray can be seen 30km (20 miles) away. To gain an overall impression of the Falls, the 'Flight of the Angels' light plane trip is a must, as is a cruise up the mighty Zambezi River. It is possible to walk across to Zambia (with the minimum of formalities) to view from the other side; this is also highly recommended, for the Falls are without a doubt one of the world's grandest natural spectacles and every viewpoint reveals something new. Nearby is the Zambezi National Park, where sable antelopes and other exotic animals graze in a parkland setting.

Useful websites

<http://www.lonelyplanet.com/destinations/africa/zimbabwe/>

<http://www.zimbabwetourism.co.zw/defaulta.htm>

<http://www.travelzim.com/>

Recommended Reading

Guide Books:

- Zimbabwe – by Lonely Planet
- The Rough Guide to Zimbabwe

General:

- *Mugabe* by Colin Simpson & David Smith
- *The Struggle for Zimbabwe: the Chimurenga War* by David Martin
- *Coming of the Dry Season* by Charles Mungoshi

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