



## Health Education Africa Resource Team

### HEART FAQ (FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS)

#### GENERAL:

**Q: Will I be safe in Kenya?**

**A:** The HEART Staff will do everything in their power to ensure your safety. We stay current on all political and social issues that might threaten your safety. Our drivers are all Kenyan and are very aware of what is going on, and also have the authority to change or cancel any plans to ensure team safety. However, that being said, there is a U.S. Embassy warning against traveling to East Africa. For more information, please go to [www.travel.state.gov](http://www.travel.state.gov).

**Q: What will I be doing?**

**A:** You will be participating on a working team with a health focus on HIV/AIDS and the effects this disease has had in Kenya. This work can include things like:

- Health education in rural villages using the HEART manual
- Helping to build a home for the Kids for School (KFS) project
- Home Based Care (HBC) - visiting and encouraging home-bound AIDS patients
- Working in the major slums of Nairobi with our Women Equality Empowerment Project (WEEP)
- Teaching and learning from children at an orphanage
- Teaching and taking hope and education to children in the slums
- Working in our HEART mobile medical clinics and assisting with the Mobile Voluntary Counseling and Testing (MVCT) for HIV Testing
- Enjoying a three day, two night safari where you will see many of the exotic African wildlife
- Making friendships with the Kenyan people and your teammates that will last a lifetime

**Q: Why are we doing this?**

**A:** To bring education, treatment and care to the Kenyans we work with, offering them hope for their tomorrows. HEART is dedicated to empowering Kenyans, through education and resources, to create a healthy, disease free life for themselves and their communities. Through the teaching of volunteer teams, community development and empowerment of local leaders, HEART provides pivotal HIV/AIDS and other opportunistic disease prevention training to Kenya. HEART's efforts are in response to the call of those who lack access to the basic knowledge necessary to survive.

**Q: Who will be on my team?**

**A:** People who have a desire and passion to reach out and make a difference. Most of our teams are formed from people who know each other through church groups, work, service clubs or friends. Some people are traveling alone and can join an existing team. We will do our best to add you to a team where we feel your talents and desires best match that of the existing team. You will be given the opportunity to meet, either in person or by e-mail, your teammates prior to departure.

**Q: Is there a minimum age requirement?**

**A:** Yes, the minimum age of a team member is 18 unless they are accompanied by a legal guardian (parent, grandparent, aunt, uncle, etc.) 25 years of age or older.

**Q: Who will be my roommate?**

**A:** We will do our best to honor all roommate requests. Typically, this is determined by your Team Leader and room availability at the HEART Lodge. HEART does have a policy of no male/female roommates unless you are married or traveling with a minor (ex: your child).

**Q: Will I have fun?**

**A:** Fun is part of the plan! The key is to come with the understanding that you are here to serve. Come with that in mind and stay flexible, and you will have the most incredible trip of your life!

**TRAVEL:**

**Q: Do I need a passport?**

**A:** Yes. Applications can be obtained from most U.S. Post Office locations. Your passport must have 2 blank pages and be valid 6 months past your departure date from Kenya. If you do not have one or both of these requirements you will need to renew your passport before you travel. We suggest you submit your passport application as soon as possible and that you check and double check to make sure your passport is not expired or expiring in the near future.

**Q: How long does it take to get to Africa?**

**A:** Depending on where you are flying from, it takes 18-24 hours of flight time to arrive in Nairobi. When you add travel time to airport and waiting in airports for connecting flights it takes a total of about 36 hours.

**Q: How many bags can I pack?**

**A:** The general rule is two bags weighing 50 pounds each and one carry on. One check in bag is for personal items and one is for supplies HEART needs transported to Africa. However, each airline is different. We strongly recommend you check with your airline as to what they allow. (British Airways: [www.britishairways.com](http://www.britishairways.com), Northwest Airlines: [www.nwa.com](http://www.nwa.com), KLM Royal Dutch Airlines: [www.klm.com](http://www.klm.com)) You may also be asked to carry a few items back to the U.S. with you for the HEART U.S. offices.

**Q: Who handles the arrangement for my/my team's airline tickets?**

**A:** Jen Friel, in our HEART Colorado office, can help you purchase your/your team's airline tickets. She will contact a travel agent, with an itinerary you have decided on with her, and submit an itinerary and price for you to approve or disapprove. If you would rather secure the tickets on your own, that is no problem. In this situation, we would ask two things of the team leader. One, that you arrange the tickets for your team so that everyone will arrive and depart on the same day and at the same time. And, two, that you submit your team's proposed itinerary to Jen Friel for approval **before** you purchase the tickets. If you make your own travel arrangements, your air schedule must match the rest of your teams. As it takes over one hour to get to and from the airport, there may be an additional charge to your team if everyone does not arrive and depart at the same time and HEART staff has to make multiple trips to the airport. Please note, HEART strongly suggests that your team's flight arrives in Kenya in the evening for the safety of our staff and your team. This also helps your team to recover from jet lag quicker and easier.

**Q: How are the tickets paid for?**

**A:** If you choose to have Jen Friel (HEART CO Office) help you secure your tickets, she will ask for each team member's credit card information prior to booking the tickets. She will charge each team member's ticket onto their individual credit card. If you have already submitted to HEART the money due for the airline tickets, prior to her purchasing them for you, then she will use that money to pay for the airline tickets and will not need a credit card from you. We must receive payment for the tickets before we can purchase them. If you choose to secure your own tickets, you will pay for them in whatever manner works best for you.

**Q: Can I use my frequent flyer miles to pay for my flight?**

**A:** There are times it is possible to use your miles. However, you will need to make your own travel arrangements and your air schedule must match the rest of the teams. If additional trips to the airport are required by our staff because the team does not arrive all at the same time, there will be an additional charge for the extra trip to the Nairobi airport.

**Q: How many days/weeks is the average mission trip with HEART?**

**A:** Our mission trips are 2 weeks. You will arrive on a Sunday night and stay 2 weeks, through the following Friday. For example if you arrive on Sunday night, 1/6 you would stay until Friday, 1/18.

**Q: Can I arrive early or stay longer?**

**A:** The answer to this question is on a case by case basis. We welcome your extended stay in Kenya wherever possible for a minimal fee to cover lodging and meals. HEART has opened the doors of their lodge to other organizations as a way to increase revenue to help support the work in Kenya. We also have teams coming year round and sometimes back to back. Therefore, arrangements to stay extra days must be requested and approved in advance to be sure we have accommodations for you. If you come early or stay longer, we may be working with another team and not have staff, transportation or accommodations available for your extra stay. That being said, when available, we do offer for you to stay extra nights at a reasonable rate for your accommodations and your share of the mission work. Please contact Jen Friel (HEART CO Office) to have your plans approved in writing **prior** to booking any plane tickets.

**FINANCIAL:**

**Q: How much money will my 2 week mission trip cost?**

**A:** The cost for a two week trip is \$1,800. This fee includes the following: Training tools and opportunities in the US, 1 training/preparation day in Kenya, lodging at the HEART lodge, meals (2 meals a day as we are usually out and about during lunch), projects (such as helping to build a home for a grandmother in the Kids for School project), seminars, work in orphanages, transportation (in-country travel), safari (3 days and 2 nights). This fee does **not** include airfare, vaccinations, travel insurance, passports and visa.

**Q: How much will my airfare, vaccinations, travel insurance, passport and visa cost me?**

**A:** Airfare varies widely depending upon what time of the year you travel and how early you purchase your tickets. We have seen it range from as low as \$1,400 to as high as \$2,800. The cost of vaccinations depends completely on which vaccinations you decide to get and how much the facility you use charges. We have seen this vary from \$50 to \$350. Travel Insurance ranges from \$75 to \$200 depending upon what policy you decide to purchase and your age. (The cost is more for those over fifty.) For the most up-to-date passport fees, please go to [www.travel.state.gov](http://www.travel.state.gov). The cost to obtain a visa when entering Kenya is \$50. You will need to bring a crisp bill, issued after 2003. Your bank may require some advance notice to honor a request of new or recently issued bills.

**Q: How do I raise the funds?**

**A:** If needed, we can supply you with a sample support letter to guide you in writing a letter to share with your family and friends about your trip and ask them to contribute. As not everyone can go on such a trip, many of your friends and family will be thrilled to help you go by supporting you financially and in prayer. We call this process "Team-Raising" as these friends and family will be part of your "Home Team". You can find a "Fund-Raising Packet" with all the information you will need regarding this process on our website at [www.africaheart.com](http://www.africaheart.com).

**Q: Where should the donations go and to whom should checks be made out?**

**A:** Your "team"/support group can either give their donations directly to you for you to mail or they can mail them directly to the HEART office in Colorado (HEART, P.O. Box 631964, Highlands Ranch, CO 80163-1964). All checks should be made payable to HEART. All donors will be sent a tax deductible receipt for any donations made at the end of the tax year, unless requested earlier. Again, you can find a "Fund-Raising Packet" with all the information you need regarding this process on our website at [www.africaheart.com](http://www.africaheart.com).

**Q: If I raise more money than the \$1,800 fee due to HEART, can I get a refund for the items I paid for with my personal funds? (Airfare, vaccinations, travel insurance, passport, visa, etc.)**

**A:** Yes, there are three things we can reimburse you for: airfare, vaccinations, and travel insurance. Depending on how much money you fundraise, HEART can reimburse your entire airfare cost, vaccinations up to \$300, and travel insurance up to \$90. All must have a receipt as proof of purchase.

**Q: If I do not want a refund, where will the extra money I raise be used? Will I have a say where the money is spent?**

**A:** Absolutely! In fact, many of our teams raise more money than required to be used on team projects. While in Africa, you will be able to see first-hand where you would most like your money spent, or which project you would like to see it go towards. Often times, you and your team can deliver items purchased for your "project" to the recipient themselves.

**Q: If I can't go, can I (and my supporters) get a refund?**

**A:** Unfortunately, because HEART is a 501 (c) (3) we cannot refund because you do not go on the trip. Please keep in mind that the funds you raise must be solicited and donated with the understanding that HEART has complete discretion and control over the use of all donated funds. In order for the funds donated to allow a tax deduction, they are not yours, or contingent upon your ultimate participation, but HEART funds to be used to further its charitable purposes.

**Q: Do I need to bring any money with me?**

**A:** We suggest that you bring \$100-\$300 spending money for shopping, meals out, gifts, crafts, and souvenirs. We will help you when you arrive in country to get the best exchange rate possible at the time of your visit.

**Q: Do I need to bring new bills (US Dollars)?**

**A:** Yes. We suggest that you bring 50's or 100's that are no older than 2003 as Kenya will not accept any bills older than 2000. This will help you get the best exchange rate possible.

**IN COUNTRY:**

**Q: What will my lodging be like?**

**A:** Your lodging will vary depending upon what area we are doing ministry in. Much of your stay will be at the HEART lodge on the edge of Nairobi. Here you will have very comfortable rooms, incredible meals and hot showers. Two nights will be at a safari lodge where your accommodations will be similar to a nice hotel. It is very possible that you will spend a few nights in a village home when we do a seminar. Here you will need to be prepared to "rough" it for a couple of days with outdoor toilets and no running water or electricity.

**Q: Do I need to bring a pillow?**

**A:** A small, neck pillow is good for travel but you will not need a bed pillow. We have pillows at the HEART lodge that you can use at the lodge as well as up-country.

**Q: Do I need to bring a bed-net?**

**A:** We have bed-nets here that you can purchase for \$10 that our made by our WEEP ladies. You can also purchase the pop-up nets in the U.S. for about \$60. These will fit over the upper part of your body. Most people find they do not need a net, but the choice is up to you.

**Q: Do I need to bring food with me?**

**A:** We suggest power bars (or any other snack that is not affected by sitting in your backpack for days at a time) as many times we do not have time to stop for lunch. If you are a diabetic or need special food items please notify us before your trip and also notify the HEART Kenyan staff upon arrival.

**Q: What is the primary form of transportation we will use while in Africa?**

**A:** HEART has a custom made 2007 Land Cruiser which seats nine people comfortably as well as an extended truck that seats five. (Please note, we also rent vehicles when necessary.) They are great for the roads in Africa as they can be very rough. Our drivers are all Kenyan and are very aware of the road conditions, safety of the roads and best possible routes to take to each destination.

**Q: What will the weather be like?**

**A:** The weather is usually good in Nairobi. During the "cooler" time of year (June-September) you can expect evenings to be cool enough to require a sweater or jacket. Rain showers are normally short, but always a possibility in Kenya, so an umbrella is a good idea. Please keep in mind, the weather varies depending on where you will be working in Kenya.

## **OTHER QUESTIONS:**

### **Q: What should I pack?**

**A:** On the HEART website at [www.africaheart.com](http://www.africaheart.com), you will find the HEART Handbook. In this Handbook, you will find an extensive packing list.

### **Q: Do I need shots?**

**A:** Check with your doctor, to see what immunizations are recommended for you personally. Some of the time, immunizations are based on personal preference and are just a recommendation, not a requirement. If you do not have a doctor, you can go to the county "travel nurse" at the Public Health Dept. There you will get a full consultation and many of your questions can be answered. Then you can make your vaccine decisions based upon your personal medical profile. Please note, HEART recommends each team member get a Polio and Tetanus booster.

### **Q: Do I need an electrical adaptor?**

**A:** All electrical items in Kenya run on a 210 volt plug. If your electrical item can run on 210 volt, all you will need is an adaptor plug. If your electrical item cannot run on 210 volt, you will need a converter and an adaptor plug to use in your room. HEART provides a commercial grade converter for teams to use in the guest computer room. We do not recommend the use of "Travel" (Radio Shack, etc.) converters for items such as cameras, Blackberry's, hair dryers or curling irons.

### **Q: Is there anything our team can collect for the Kenyan people that we can bring with us?**

**A:** Yes, thanks for asking! The KFS children need vitamins! Flintstone's Children's Vitamins with iron are great. The 60 count bottle is best. We also need large bottles of Tylenol for children and Motrin for their guardians. Most of the children are cared for by their grandmothers, so think of the aches and pains of the elderly. For our children's ministries, your team could collect the following items to use while you are in Africa working with the children: 1,000 crayons (we give one crayon to each child), bubbles (for you to use with the children), frisbees, pipe cleaners (great craft item), small toys, colored pencils and markers.

### **Q: Are there any gifts we can bring for our hosts/hostesses in Kenya?**

**A:** Wash cloths, nice writing pens, flashlights, handkerchiefs for men and women, women's large colorful head scarves, magnified eye glasses for men and women, small sewing kits, and crayons and coloring books for the children are all so appreciated.

**Welcome to the adventure of a life time as you travel to Kenya, East Africa and serve and work among genuinely kind and friendly people that greatly need our help!**